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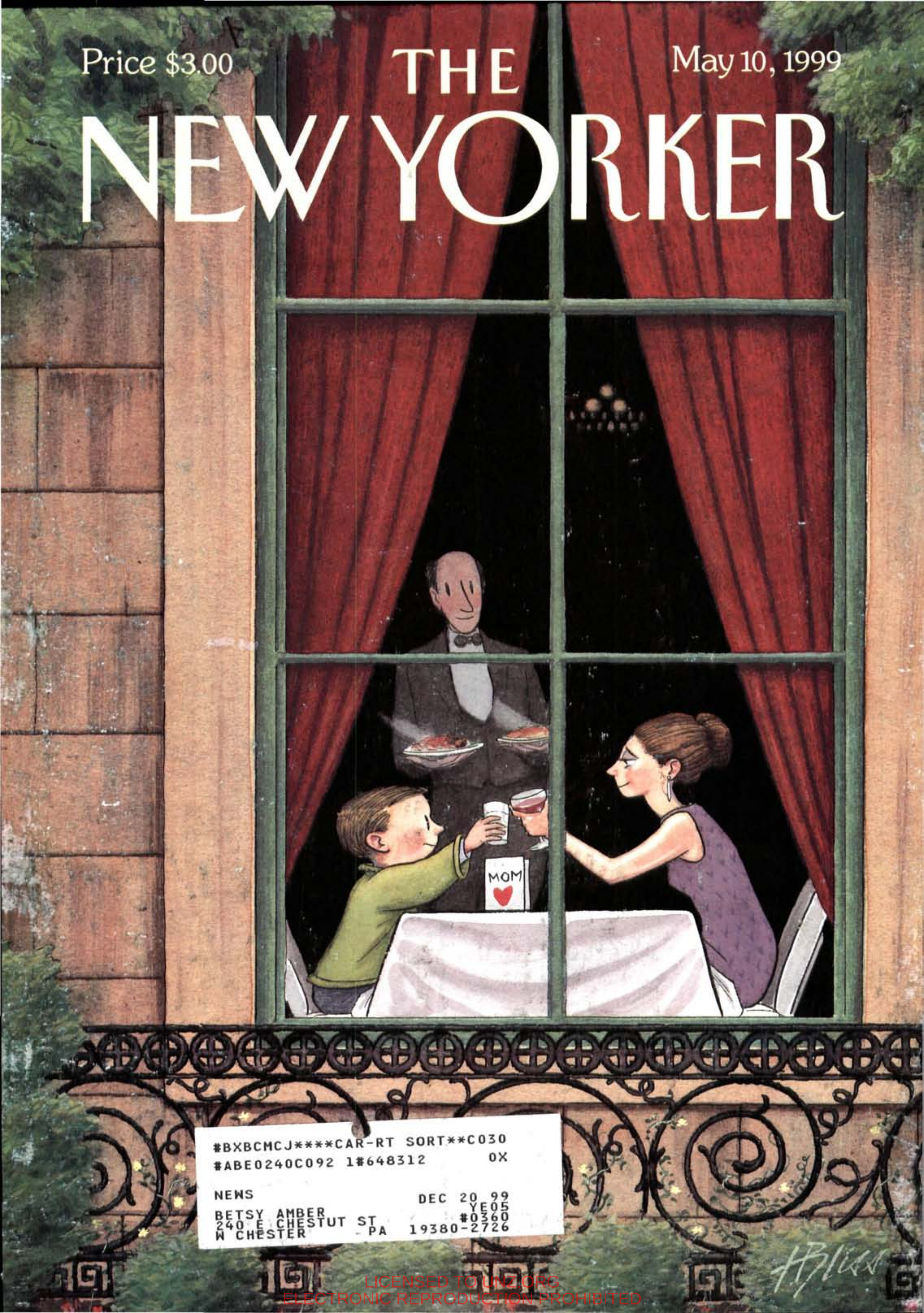
THE NEW YORKER

May 10, 1999



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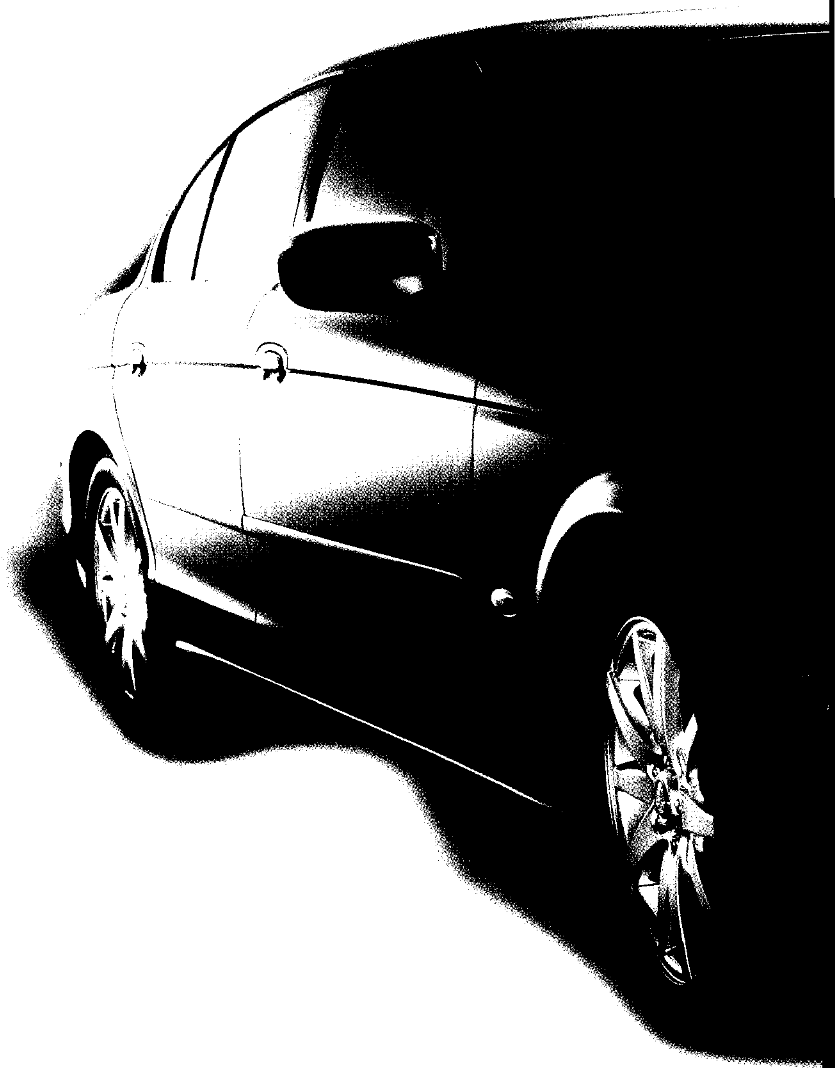

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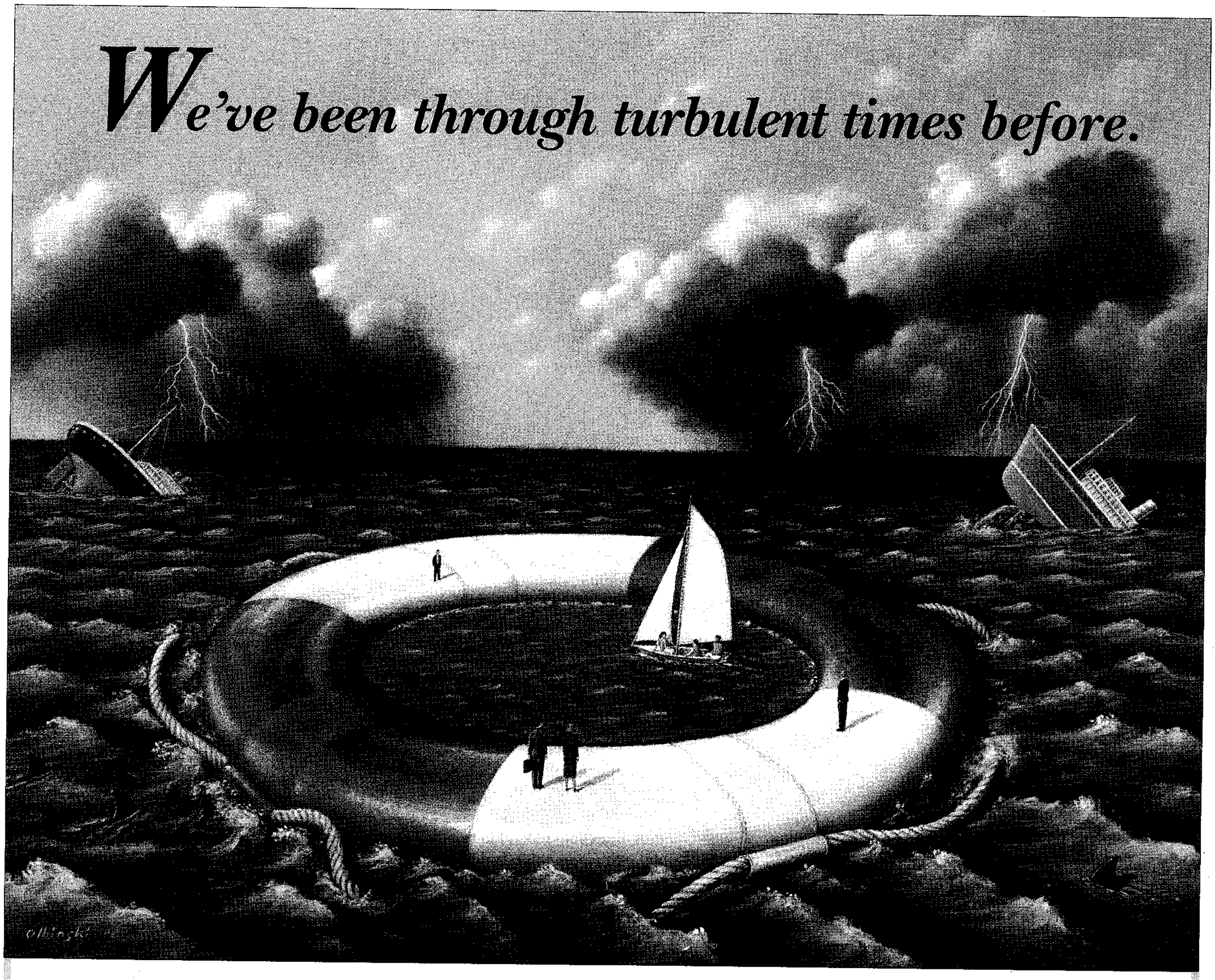

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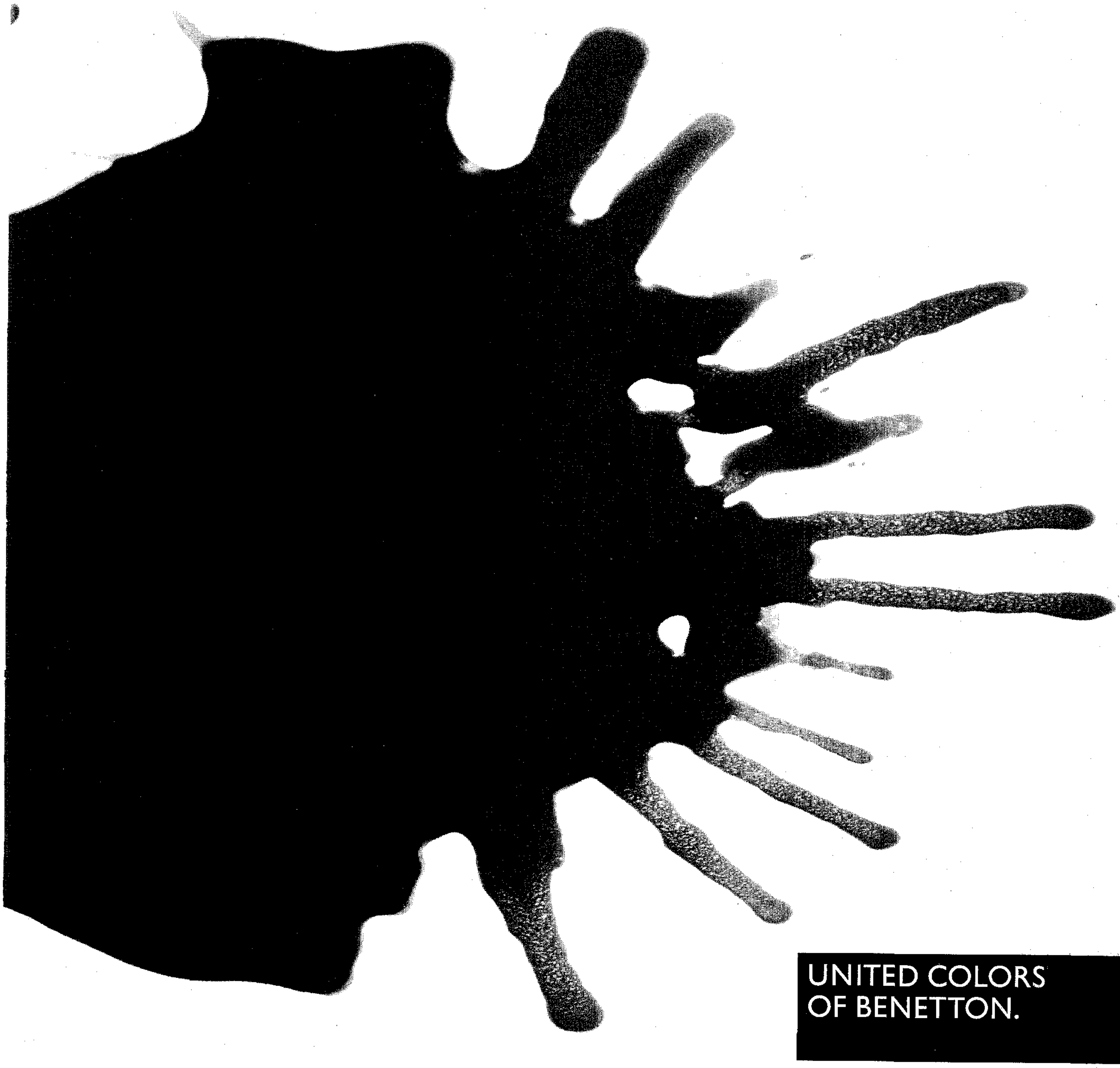

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CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF ("Balkan Physics," p. 68) is a writer and historian whose most recent books are "The Warrior's Honor" and "Isaiah Berlin: A Life."

ALEX ROSS ("The Wanderer," p. 56) is *The New Yorker's* music critic.

JEROME GROOPMAN ("Pet Scan," p. 46) is the Recanati Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

ELIZABETH KOLBERT ("Stormin' Norman," p. 40) writes a regular column on local politics for the magazine.

MILAN KUNDERA (Notebook, p. 94) is the author, most recently, of the novels "Slowness" and "Identity."

HENDRIK HERTZBERG (The Wayward Press, p. 96), a former editor of *The New Republic,* writes a column on media for *The New Yorker.*

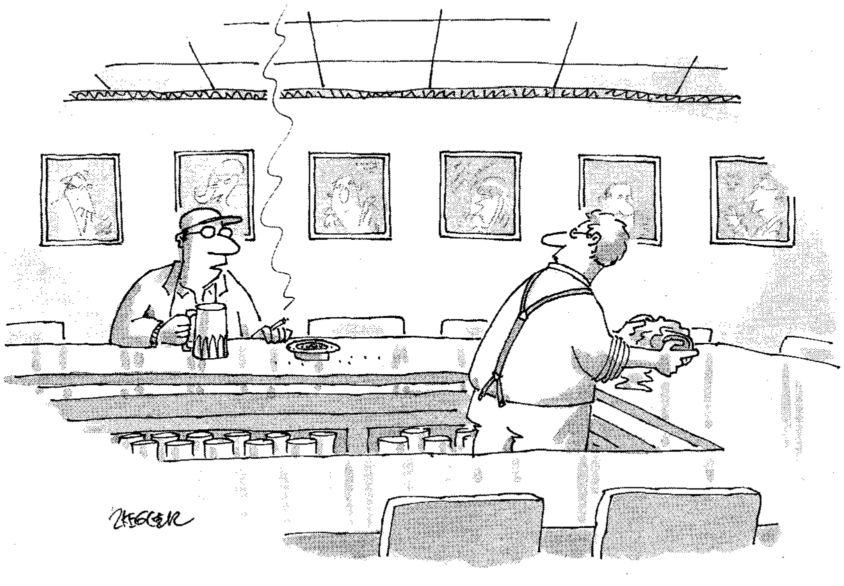
NICHOLAS LEMANN (Books, p. 86) joined the magazine as a staff writer in April. His books include "Out of the Forties" and "The Promised Land."

NADINE GORDIMER (Fiction, p. 82) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1991. Her new book, "Living in Hope and History: Notes from Our Century," will come out in November.

LAWRENCE WESCHLER ("A Contest of Values," p. 52) is the author, most recently, of "A Wanderer in the Perfect City" and "Boggs: A Comedy of Values."

JOAN ACOCELLA (Dancing, p. 100) is *The New Yorker's* dance critic. Her edition of "The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky" was published in February.

A. R. AMMONS (Poem, p. 70) was awarded the 1998 Tanning Prize. His latest book of poems is "Glare." ♦



"Forgive me, Eddie, if I'm unable to contain the occasional squeal of anticipatory glee over the new 'Star Wars' movie."

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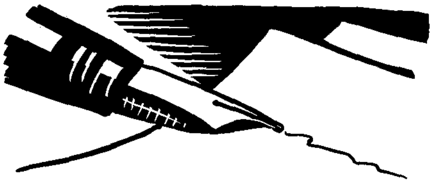

THE WORLD'S WARS

Robert S. Boynton, in his Profile of the historian Niall Ferguson ("Thinking the Unthinkable," April 12th), writes that "by examining the options that were available at critical junctures" Ferguson is able, as he himself has written, to "recapture the uncertainty of decision-makers in the past, to whom the future was merely a set of possibilities." This approach has the potential to spark a badly needed revival of the study of history: schools manage to turn the most momentous events of the past into a boring litany of dates, but Boynton reports that in reading Ferguson's newest book, "The Pity of War," he found himself "caught up in the suspense" of the First World War. If history were taught with the recognition that it, like everyday life, is about decision-making in the face of uncertainty (and what we can learn from those decisions), we and our politicians might actually learn something from it.

MORTON RUBINGER
Reston, Va.

Mr. Ferguson's method of counterfactual history reduces contemplation about society and history to mere nostalgia; it represents a yearning for the world that has been lost, and a refusal to accept a world that is now here. His argument in "The Pity of War" that if the British had not entered the First World War the war would have been contained is not new. And underlying it, it seems to me, is old-fashioned racism, founded on the assumption that the world would be a better place if only Britain hadn't lost its empire, if only the Europeans who still dominate the world could continue to do so unencumbered by the liberal guilt that was forced on them by the Bolshevik Revolution and all those blasted anticolonial movements.

ROBERT GREGG
Haverford, Pa.

One might wonder, counterfactually, what if the United States had not interfered in the Balkans in 1919? Woodrow Wilson and other world leaders redrew the map of Europe according to the principle of self-determination as they saw it. Guided by noble intentions, moral authority, and naïveté, these leaders cobbled together countries (including Yugoslavia) out of liberated populations that had little in common with their new compatriots except, in some cases, a similar language. Eighty years later, the United States, led by another Southern, Democratic, idealistic President, is bombing one of its own mistakes.

ERWIN CLEVE
Toronto, Canada

Seymour M. Hersh ("Saddam's Best Friend," April 5th) writes that I was among those who had enthusiastically endorsed Richard Butler as my successor as the executive chairman of the United Nations Special Commission for Iraq. Hersh continues, "It was, Ekeus told me later, a terrible misjudgment." To this I will state: I still enthusiastically endorse Butler.

ROLF EKEUS
Ambassador of Sweden
to the United States
Washington, D.C.

PREHISTORIC TOURISTS

I noticed an enhanced version of Bruce McCall's wonderful cover "Easter Morning" (April 5th) on a bulletin board in a midtown office. The dauntless city squirrel, who appears to be facing down the clearly-from-out-of-town pterodactyl, had a cartoon balloon above his head in which he offered the interloper a New Yorker's legendary warmth: "Welcome to New York. Now get the hell outta here."

THOMAS MURPHY
Katonah, N.Y.

•

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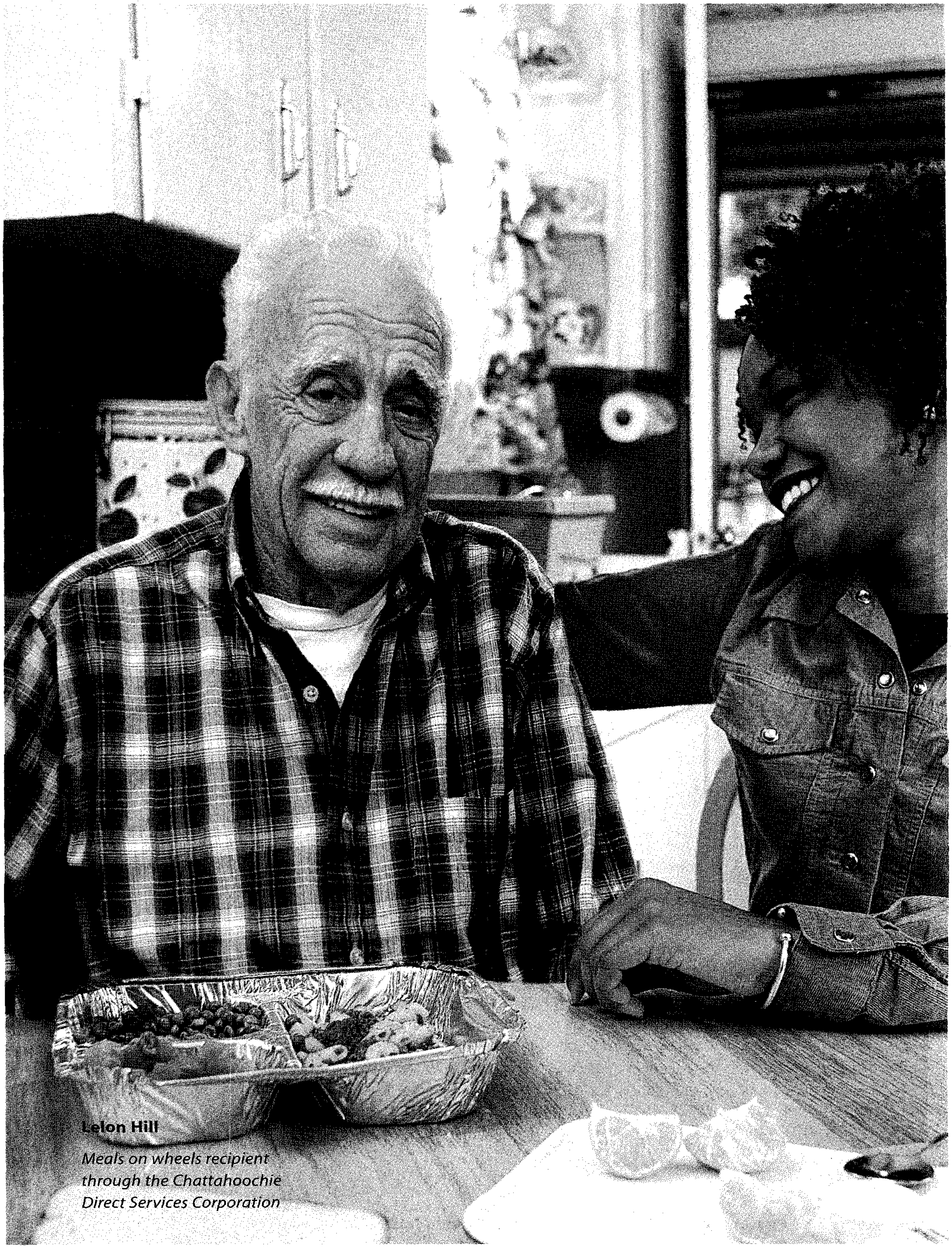

Lelon Hill

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6:00 a.m.

...Minnie Childs begins preparation of food

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...Vera & Jerzy Wojtysiak help package individual meals

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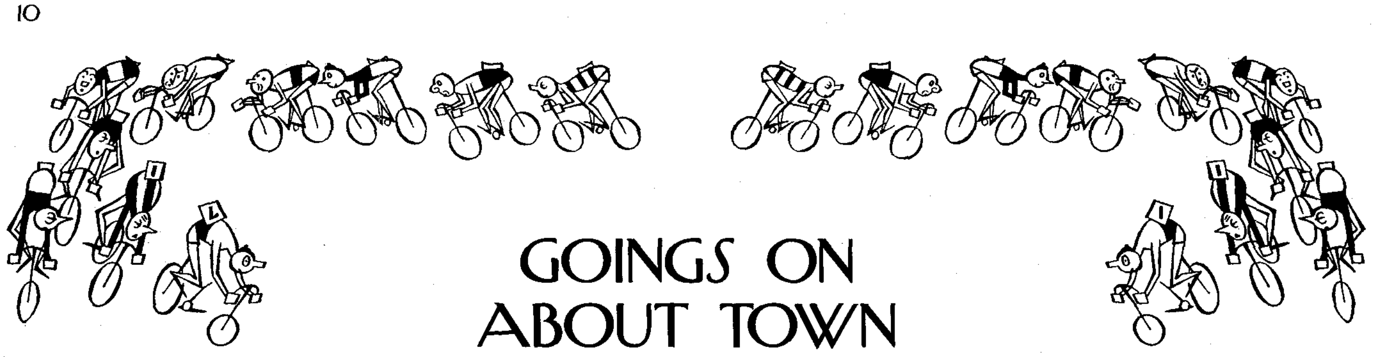


GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

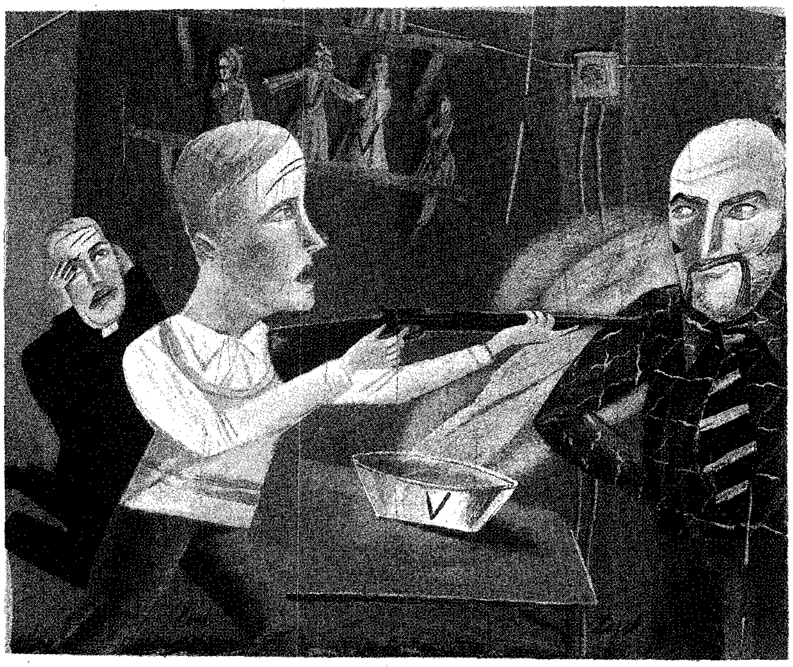
(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Cider House Rules, Part I: Here in St. Cloud's—Colm Meaney, Josh Hamilton, and Jillian Armenante star in Peter Parnell's adaptation of the John Irving novel. Preview on May 5. Opens May 6 at 7. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Do Re Mi—City Center's Encores! series wraps up its sixth season with a concert staging of this 1960 satire of the music business by Jule Styne (music), Comden and Green (lyrics), and Garson Kanin (book). May 6-7 at 8, May 8 at 2 and 8, and May 9 at 6:30. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

East Is East—The children of a Pakistani mother and an English father are torn between cultures, in a drama by Ayub Khan-Din. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—This year's six-week marathon of one-acts begins May 5 at 7:30, with plays by Leslie Ayvazian, Romulus Linney, Cassandra Medley, and Cherie Vogelstein. The first series runs through May 16. The marathon continues through June 13. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)



David Ganly, Brían F. O'Byrne, and Maelíosa Stafford, in "The Lonesome West."

OLAF HAJEK

Goodnight Children Everywhere—Richard Nelson's most recent drama is set during the spring of 1945 in London, and concerns the reunion of three siblings separated during the war. Previews begin May 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Much Ado About Nothing—The Irondale Ensemble's version of Shakespeare's comedy, set in 1876 at a Great Plains cavalry post. Opens May 5 at 8. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

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Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight—A comedy by first-time playwright Peter Ackerman, set in the bedrooms of three Manhattan couples. John Rando is the director. In previews. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

This Lime Tree Bower—Primary Stages presents a drama about a trio of boozers involved in a heist, by the Irish playwright Conor McPherson ("The Weir"). In previews. (354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Amy's View—Dame Judi Dench portrays a distinguished West End actress, in a recent drama by David Hare. Directed by Richard Eyre. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Ancestral Voices—A. R. Gurney's play, in which a Buffalo grandmother disrupts her family by divorcing her husband to marry his best friend. Presented by Lincoln Center Theatre as a staged reading, with a revolving cast. Sundays at 7:30 and Mondays at 8, through June 6. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Angel Street—Patrick Hamilton's 1938 thriller, on which the film "Gaslight" was based. (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes May 23.)

Annie Get Your Gun—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Ashes to Ashes—Harold Pinter's masterly evocation of how torture corrodes the human spirit, directed by Karel Reisz and superbly acted by Lindsay Duncan and David Strathairn. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/22 & 3/1/99.) (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900. Closes May 9.)

Beautiful Thing—Jonathan Harvey's 1993 drama, set in London, about two working-class boys who fall in love. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

The Civil War—The musical. Frank Wildhorn wrote the music and book. Jerry Zaks is the director. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Closer—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters (Natasha Richardson, Anna Friel, Ciaran Hinds, and Rupert Graves) as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes; it's a shrewdly designed story that brings the characters up against their hearts. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. (4/5/99) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

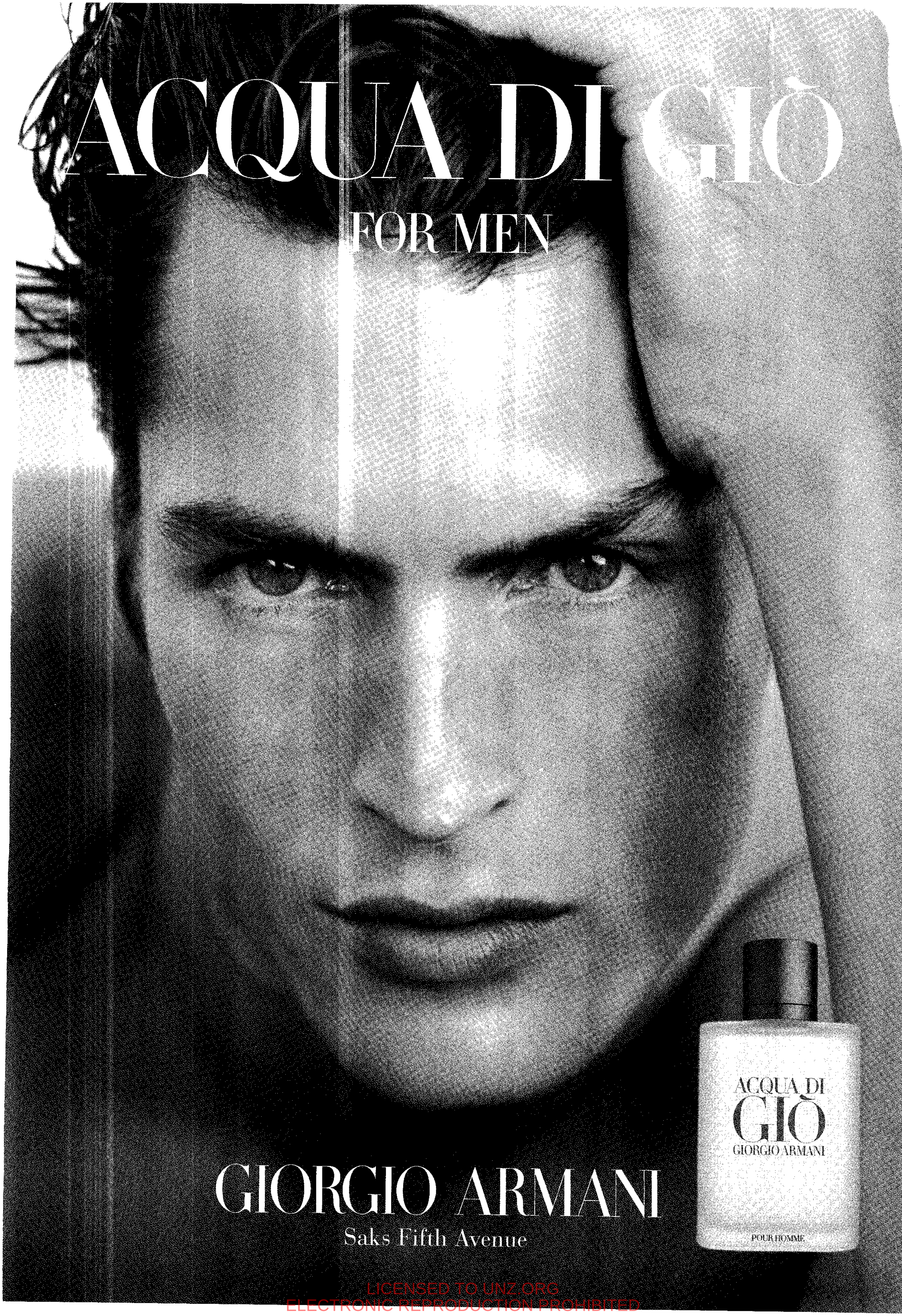
A Couple of Blaguards—Malachy McCourt and Mickey Kelly perform Mr. McCourt's two-man autobiographical show, which he co-wrote with his brother Frank. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Death of a Salesman—The casting of this production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. Brian Dennehy is almost too strong and too solid in himself for the panic-stricken salesman, yet he makes Willy Loman's crazy competitiveness and his misguided love for his son Biff hurt like a punch to the heart. Elizabeth Franz turns in the most fully realized performance, as Willy's beleaguered wife. She is as thin as Dennehy is large, yet she grounds the play and gives it a strong, almost stoic emotional center. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Dream True—A musical by Ricky Ian Gordon and Tina Landau. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes May 8.)

Dreaming in Cuban—An evening of two solo acts, performed in a Cuban-café setting (rum drinks are served, and a pair of lithe mambo dancers raise the curtain for both acts). In the first, adapted by the director Wynn Handman from the novel "Dreaming in Cuban," by Cristina Garcia, Eileen Galindo portrays three women whose political differences (pro- and anti-Fidel) and accents (Spanish and Brooklyn) reveal the cultural effects New York has on a family transplanted from Havana. Galindo is transfixing, but she deserves a tighter monologue. Michael John Garcés, who wrote and performs the second piece, "Agua Ardiente," has less time onstage, but it's just enough for him to finish his poetic rap on machismo before his booming (and sometimes sputtering) voice has a chance to wear the audience down. He tells a slighter story than Galindo, but he shares her ability to engage. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes May 16.)

Exactly Like You—Sexual tension in the courtroom almost always produces entertaining drama, but in this screwball comedy by A. E. Hotchner and Cy Coleman it also makes for song and dance—despite the judge's calls for order. The lively cast rise to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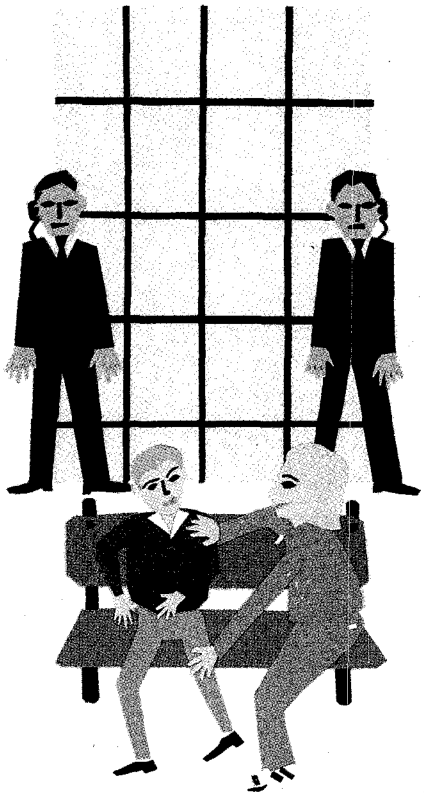
the slapstick level of the scenario (a woman is suing her son-in-law for locking her in the bathroom), and they manage to keep funny from degenerating into stupid, with only a few lapses. Staged by the York Theatre Company. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Far East—A drama by A. R. Gurney, set during the Korean War. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)



Robin Morse and Lizbeth Mackay, in "Lips."

Footloose—A musical adaptation of the 1984 film. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Fosse—This steamy revue of works by the choreographer Bob Fosse doesn't reveal anything new about the man behind the dances, but it does remind us why we won't be forgetting him anytime soon. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Gershwins' Fascinating Rhythm—A revue celebrating the songs of George and Ira Gershwin. Mark Lamos is the director. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Gimmick—Dael Orlandersmith performs her new solo play, about two outcast kids who dream of ways to escape their lives in East Harlem. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

The Iceman Cometh—Eugene O'Neill's late drama, starring Kevin Spacey. Howard Davies is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues—A marvellous collection of songs—ranging from traditional African chants and spirituals to Appalachian folk, country, traditional and modern blues, and pop—performed by a dynamic cast, in what turns out to be an oddly didactic cabaret act. The music alone could have showcased the influence of the blues, but instead the audience is subjected to explanatory notes ("Strange Fruit" is about a bad time in Mississippi's past, for example) and bad-talk-show banter, and the result is something like a shopping-mall version of "Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk." Fortunately, the blues triumphantly survives even this. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Joy Luck Club—Susan Kim's adaptation of the Amy Tan novel, staged by the Pan Asian Rep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes May 15.)

Lake Hollywood—The Signature Theatre Company wraps up its John Guare season with a new work by the playwright. Ralph Waite and Kate Burton lead the cast. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes May 23.)

The Lion in Winter—The late James Goldman's 1966 version of the royal quarrels of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II, turned into a bourgeois family squabble, makes a solid high-camp vehicle for Stockard Channing and Laurence Fishburne. This production is a well-managed waste of time, with a good set by David Gallo and able direction by Michael Mayer. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes May 23.)

Lips—Constance Congdon's new play is practically a miracle: a political satire that is funny and leaves its audience with something substantive to think about, without being preachy. Nobody escapes unscathed in this fantasy: a lame-duck female President, who is happily married and straight, decides to take on the religious right by falsely coming out as a lesbian, which she does with the help of a too-loyal aide and a paroled computer criminal who really is a lesbian. The cast—Lizbeth Mackay, Stephen Barker Turner, and Robin Morse—are uniformly sharp, and Greg Leaming's direction is clean and fast. The play's many locales are well served by Rob Ordorisio's elegantly mutable set. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

The Lonesome West—Two battling Irish brothers duke it out in Leenane, in a black comedy by Martin McDonagh. Directed by Garry Hynes. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Marlene—Siân Phillips portrays Marlene Dietrich, in a musical play by Pam Gems, set in a concert hall in Paris in 1969. Directed by Sean Mathias. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Mineola Twins—Paula Vogel's satire on women's roles—how they have changed and how they have stayed the same over the past forty years—predates her Pulitzer Prize-winning "How I Learned to Drive" and contains a lot less food for thought. Before the curtain goes up, Doris Day songs are played in the theatre and an enormous image of a torpedo bra stares out at the audience—and that's as subtle and fresh as this work gets. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Never on Friday—The Israeli cantor turned singing star Dudu Fisher performs songs and tells stories. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Night Must Fall—The main problem with this National Actors Theatre production of Emlyn Williams's 1935 thriller is that the play was probably never that thrilling to begin with, and it certainly isn't thrilling in 1999. Big house, rich old lady in a wheelchair, charming stranger? *Please.* (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Not About Nightingales—The first play that Thomas Lanier Williams signed "Tennessee," successfully resuscitated by the Royal National Theatre. The absence of Williams's distinctive cadences and of his usual psychological complexity marks it as the work of a tenderfoot, yet the choreographic panache of Trevor Nunn's production invests the script with a poetic stylishness the prose lacks. (3/8/99) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Peter Pan—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby is back in town to star in a limited engagement of the 1954 musical. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Ring Round the Moon—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Christopher Fry's 1950 adaptation of Anouilh's comedy "L'Invitation au Château." Gerald Gutierrez is the director. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Rose McClendon: Harlem's Gift to Broadway—Vinie Burrows wrote and stars in a one-woman show about the celebrated black actress. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 279-4200.)

The Shadow of a Gunman—Sean O'Casey learned a lot about subtlety and balance between 1923, when the Abbey Theatre produced this play, and the next year, when he wrote "Juno and the Paycock." Both are explorations of the Irish Civil War, but in this show there's too much farce, too broadly written, to justify the final tragedy. Nonetheless, it has some brilliant passages, and the fine Irish Rep company, led by Declan Mooney and with a delightful performance by Aedin Maloney, as a Republican sympathizer, makes the evening fun. Directed by Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Snakebit—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy-drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer jokes, more "issues"). Nonetheless, it's almost as painless as back-to-back episodes of "Friends," and the cast is topnotch. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

The Stumbling Tongue—An evening of six short plays dealing with the complications of communication. (New York Performance Works, 85 West Broadway, at Chambers St. 840-8400, ext. 54. Closes May 8.)

The 2.5 Minute Ride—The comic actress Lisa Kron gets it: unless a personal story resonates with humanity, it alienates. Her solo show, a tale of her trip to Auschwitz with her father (who survived the Holocaust but whose parents did not), is offset by extremely funny memories of her family's regular trips to an Ohio amusement park (her father loves roller coasters) and of her brother's wedding to a woman he met on the Internet. In the midst of it all, Kron pulls off the impossible: she makes you feel something like compassion for a Nazi her father interrogated after the war; you still hate him, but he almost seems human. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

Via Dolorosa—Because David Hare's lively monologue about his first trip to Israel is about Israelis and Arabs, he sees this work as activism; the advertisements for the show refer to it as a "play." In fact, it is neither. It is a somewhat overproduced ninety-minute after-dinner speech that sheds no new light on the conflict. (3/29/99) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Weir—Conor McPherson's play takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub, where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns that fill the air with glimmers of fear and resignation. It's a gentle, well-written series of anecdotes, and it has a bittersweet charm; the question is about its reputed depths. For all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, it is finally a shaggy-bog story. (4/12/99) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

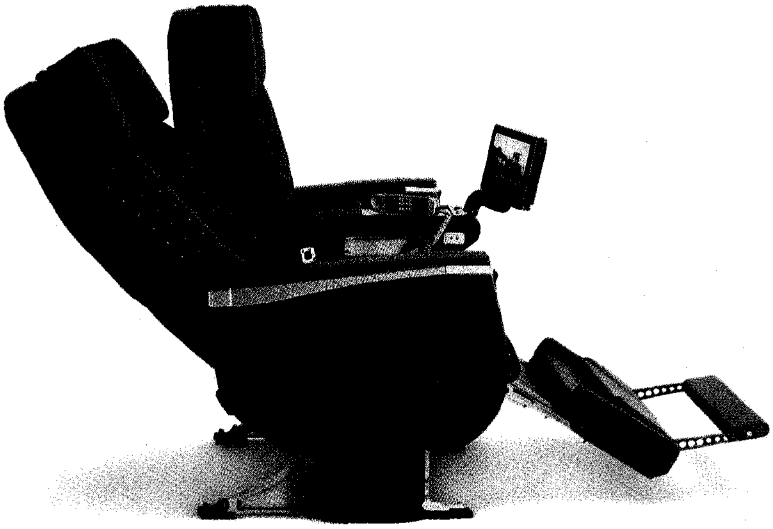
Wit—Right up to the last second, this first play by Margaret Edson, about the life and death (from ovarian cancer) of a John Donne scholar (Kathleen Chalfant, in an excruciating, powerful performance), has riches of acting, writing, and stagecraft. (1/18/99) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown—A nothing burger for audiences of all ages. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Ho-

Alone at last.



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tel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KILLER JOE:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. (Closes May 30.). . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SIDE MAN:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SOUND OF MUSIC:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE:** HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. . . . **THIS IS OUR YOUTH:** Douglas Fairbanks, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—May 5-7 at 8, May 8 at 2 and 8, and May 9 at 3: "Swan Lake." . . . ¶ May 11 at 8: "Apollo," "Orpheus," and "Agon." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through June 27.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 5 at 2 and 8 and May 6 at 8: "Le Corsaire." . . . ¶ May 7 and May 10-11 at 8 and May 8 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. The season continues through June 19.)

Eliot Feld's Ballet Tech—May 5 at 8: "Contra Pose," "A Soldier's Tale," and "Paper Tiger." . . . ¶ May 6 at 8: "Simon Sez," "Asia," "Re: X," and "Felix: The Ballet." . . . ¶ May 7 at 8: "A Footstep of Air," "The Gods Amused," "Mending," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ May 8-9 at 2: The family-matinée program. . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Doo Dah Day," "Cherokee Rose," "Yo Shakespeare," and "Jukebox." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

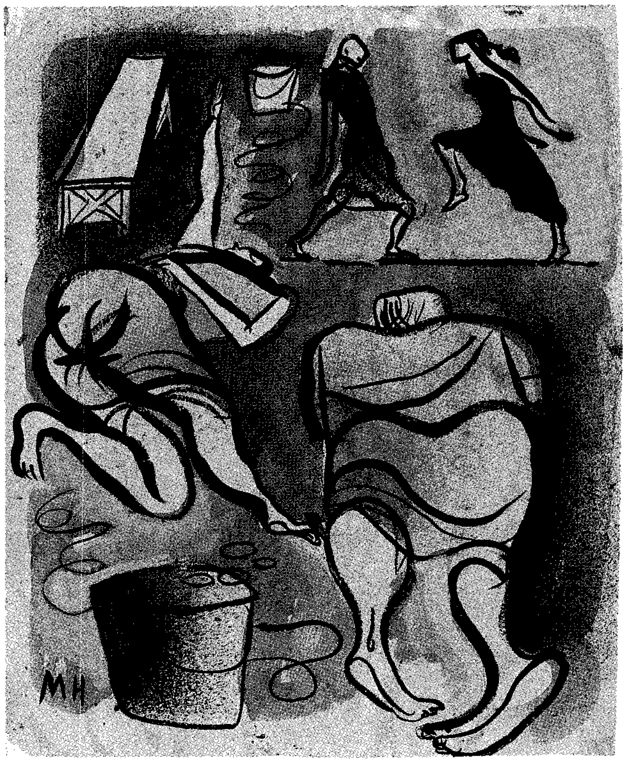
"Live Communication"—Savion Glover and fellow-tappers Ayodele Casel, Abron Glover, Jason Samuels, and Omar Edwards perform with an onstage quartet and a host of surprise guests who show up nightly to join in the big jam-session finales. (Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave., at 13th St. 239-6200. May 3-7 and May 10-11 at 8 and May 8 at 6 and 10. Through May 22.)

"Madison as I Imagine It"—The choreographer John Jasperse's latest evening-length work grew out of a company member's stories about her childhood in that Midwestern college town. In Jasperse's stage version, however, the imaginary Madison takes on the alluring traits of a place you have not yet visited—his town, for example, possesses a nearly utopian, if sometimes dysfunctional, sense of community. He accomplishes this not by traditional partnering but by continuing the exploration of touch that has marked his recent work. This piece, he says, is not concerned with the darker side of touching—power and manipulation; instead, the dancers try out softer, fragile, intertwining movements. "You see four people trying to fuse until you can't even tell which body part belongs to who." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 6-9 and May 11 at 8. Through May 16.)

Junko Kikuchi & Dancers—The Japanese choreographer and former Joffrey dancer Kikuchi presents two American premières, the group work "I·K·I" and "Homage," a solo honoring the stage designer Tetsuhiko Maeda. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 832-1155. May 7-8 at 8.)

"Polka Love and Other Dances"—Lise Brenner and her seven-member troupe perform four works, including the title piece, which alternates between Arthur Murray-style polka steps and choreography modelled on Hollywood-movie versions of ballet. (Mulberry Street Theatre, 70 Mulberry St. 349-0126. May 6-8 at 8.)

"Music and Dance of Java"—Gamelan music by a thirty-five-piece orchestra (which includes racked gongs, metallophones, xylophones, zithers, fiddles, and drums) provides the background for such classical Javanese dances as "Golek Ayun-ayun" (about a maiden and her rituals) and "Gambiranom" (about a prince who dreams of love). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 8 at 8.)



The John Jasperse Company in "Madison as I Imagine It," at Dance Theatre Workshop.

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company—The company presents three works from repertory: "Ballad," set to poems by Dylan Thomas; "Blue Phrase," set to Eric Dolphy's solo version of "God Bless the Child"; and the 1989 masterwork "D-Man in the Waters, Part I." (Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. 718-760-0064. May 8 at 3 and 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Jackson Browne—Though he no longer commands large audiences or noteworthy sales, Browne was once a major songwriting stud. For this all-acoustic show, he drops the band and returns to strumming a few unfettered songs. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-834-8794, ext. 17. May 5 at 7. A benefit concert.)

George Russell Living Time Orchestra—Musical theorist, composer, bandleader, and stylistic linchpin from the bebop era on, Russell nonetheless virtually never appears in New York City. His brainy and brawny orchestrations will be heard in full force when played by a big band. It's challenging and rewarding music that should not be missed. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. May 8 at 7:30.)

Vic Damone—The ageless vocalist. (Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 718-960-8833. May 8 at 8.)

"Vicki Sue Robinson . . . Behind the Beat"—The diva who turned the beat around sings the story of her life. (Kaufman Theatre, 534 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Through May 30.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—May 6-7: The precocious Irish folksinger **LUKA BLOOM,** best known for his ingenious acoustic cover of L.L. Cool J's "I Need Love." May 11: **JONATHA BROOKE.** Though she was unceremoniously dropped from her major-label record deal, this thirty-four-year-old Boston-born post-folkie makes Jewel seem like a beginner. Her latest CD, "Jonatha Brooke Live," comprised of recent performances (she's been playing in Borders bookshops), is available online. See her before she fades into the electronic ether.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—May 8: Loud Family keyboardist **ALISON FAITH LEVY** teams up with former Camper Van Beethoven bassist **VICTOR KRUMMENACH.** The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—The members of the San Francisco-based **TIN HAT TRIO** (May 6) play the viola, accordion, toy piano, guitar, mandolin, and Dobro, among other instruments. The result is a kind of alternative chamber music, mixing classical influences, jazz progressions, and Old World rhythms. Their haunting and strangely familiar music (which can be found on the new album "Memory Is an Elephant") is a soundtrack for the kind of puzzling dream which leaves you sitting awake in the middle of the night.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 7: Guitarist **GARY LUCAS** leads his trio Gods and Monsters. May 8: The music **DR. ISRAEL** (real name: Douglas Bennett) whips up in his Brooklyn studio is as mystifying and, ultimately, rewarding as your first pulse-raising ride on the New York City subway. It's easy to get lost in his latest release, "Inna City Pressure." Dr. Israel switches from mindblowing break beats to power-guitar chords, sometimes on the same track ("The Doctor Vs. the Wizard" is built around the hard rock of Ozzy Osbourne). But like the rumbling subway, Dr. Israel's dub wizardry propels roots-reggae melodies, jungle grooves, and a punk sensibility into a wicked ride. Who knew the train from Kingston to Crooklyn would turn out to be a local, and that it would get so packed along the way? This is a trip worth taking.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—May 8: **TIN HAT TRIO** (see Joe's Pub). May 9: **APRIL MARCH** (née Elinor Blake) is a former illustrator for "The Ren & Stimpy Show" and an ex-member of the Pussywillows with a yearning for the seductive sounds of sixties Continental pop. She sings and purrs mostly in French, and with the help of producer and arranger Bertrand Burgalat (who lent some cultural authenticity to her recent release "Chrominance Decoder") Mlle. March conjures up an era long past. Drink enough red wine and smoke enough Gaulloises, and you'll expect Serge Gainsbourg to take the stage next.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—May 5: Old-school, antiviolence rapper **KRS-1,** best known for his work in Boogie Down Productions (with the late Scott LaRock) and as an advocate of "Edutainment" (from the title of his excellent solo album). May 7: Former Jawbox guitarist J. Robbins's new outfit **BURNING AIRLINES.**

ROCK NOTES

The Art of Noise—Few things say more about a rock group than the song it chooses to lead off a record. Some bands begin with a surefire single; others bury the hit and force you to appraise the album on its own merits. The opening cuts of two new records illustrate the problem with first impressions.

13 (Virgin), the sixth disk from the English pop group Blur (long pigeonholed as the thinking lad's Oasis), opens with a lovely church-flavored sing-along called "Tender." "Come on, come on, come on," testifies vocalist Damon Albarn, "Love's the greatest thing." There's something odd about a bunch of snotty Brits dressing up in gospel robes, but the disarming corniness of the sentiment promises a collection of appealing tunes. Too bad this introduction is meant to be ironic. Albarn, who recently endured a tabloid breakup with his longtime girlfriend and Elastica singer Justine Frischmann (they were London's Brooke and Andre), must really think love is bollocks: he mucks up the rest of "13" with an irritating skein of digital rot (administered by producer William Orbit, fresh from revivifying Madonna). Electronic noise doesn't suit Blur. The band, even at its punkiest (see last year's "Song #2") has always been a model of clarity and clean lines. "13" feels like Fred Astaire in a street fight.

Good Morning Spider (Capitol), the second CD from Sparklehorse (the alter ego of Virginia pop eccentric Mark Linkous), begins with a blast of dyspeptic amphetamine noise called "Pig" that's as ugly as anything on "13." Linkous has good reason to be angry, too. Whereas Albarn had his heart broken, Linkous two years ago had to contend with a heart attack (the result of his sudden awakening from a lengthy, prescription-drug-induced blackout). "Pig" hints at a gruelling ear-bruiser of a record, but then something odd happens. Having done the noise thing, Linkous gives the next sixteen tracks (with two uptempo exceptions) over to a fugue of acoustic guitars, toy pianos, and tinkling vibraphones—a fragile suite made more complex by an ever-present shadow of violence. On a gentle, ostinato-driven lament called "Sunshine," Linkous invests such plain banalities as "I opened my eyes and watched . . . the sun shine" with a brush-with-death gravity. Too bad Blur couldn't risk sounding so human.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—May 7-8: **OZRIC TENTACLES,** the five-piece English combo that is single-handedly keeping the spirit of bloated seventies-era art rock alive.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

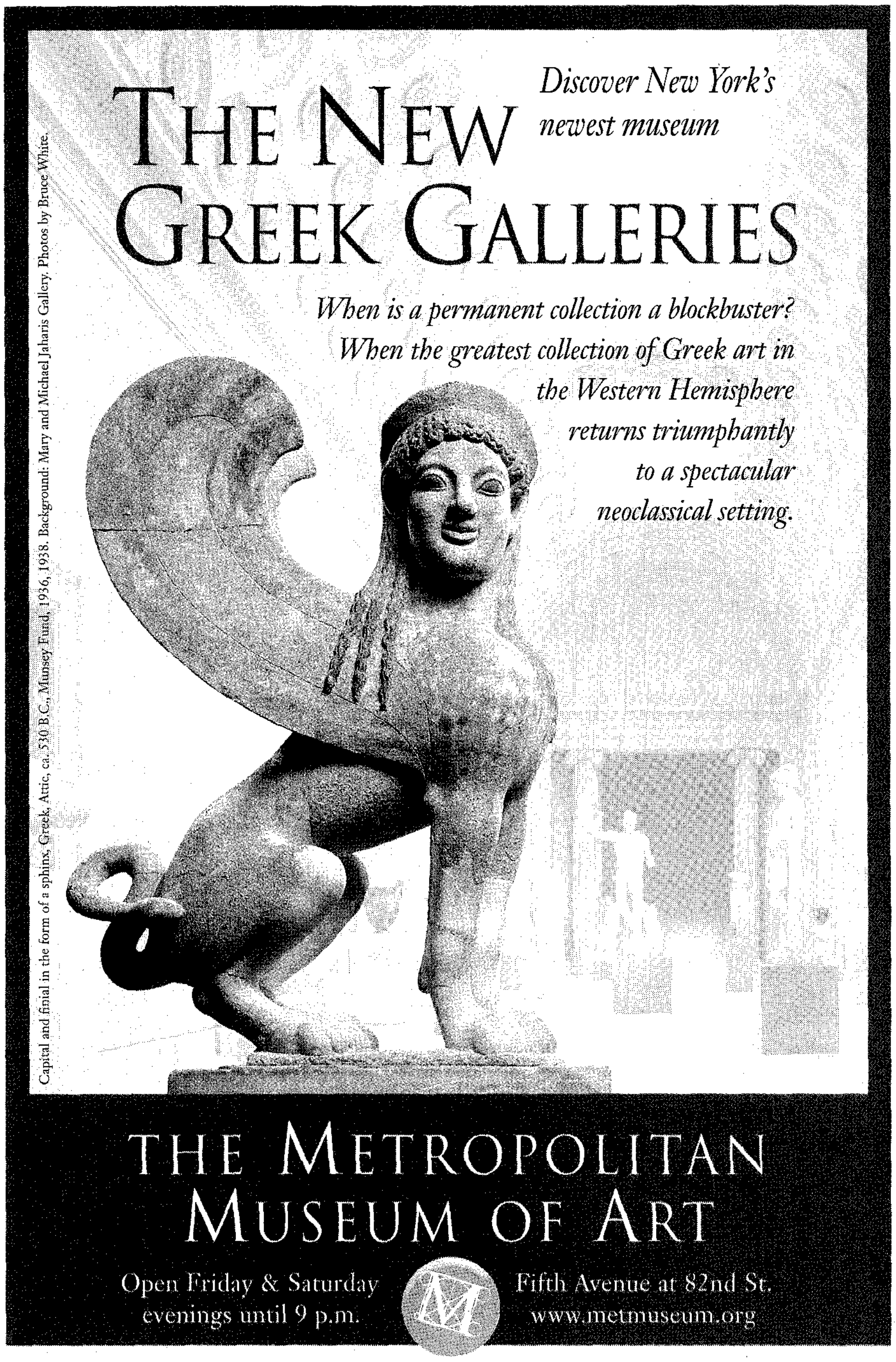
Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—May 6: The **DON BRADEN** quartet. Braden has all the makings of a tenor-saxophone contender. Live, he's a ripsnorter who combines the pleasures of youthful exuberance with historical knowledge that honors the masters without fawning over them. May 7-8: The meat-and-potatoes boys of neo-bop saxophone—**DONALD HARRISON, JAVON JACKSON,** and **ANTONIO HART**—convene for a throwdown that promises thrills, chills, and musical testosterone aplenty. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through May 9: The **JACKIE MCLEAN QUARTET** and the **STANLEY TURRENTINE** quartet. In the fifties, alto saxophonist McLean was a sideman on early Miles Davis sessions; by the sixties, players like the iconoclastic Ornette Coleman had appeared as sidemen on McLean recordings. Having kept himself in the fray for decades, McLean is now a compact compendium of modern jazz. His range makes the distinctions between bop, hard bop, and modal playing disappear. / You judge a tenor saxophonist like Turrentine not by his virtuosity or his invention but by his sound—in this case, a huge, rounded calling card of sonic warmth and gritty soul. He's recently pledged further allegiance to his jazz roots, and, cleansed of his commercialism, he's making quite a showing. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through May 9: The **FREDDIE COLE** quartet. Cole is just so smooth. His voice floats across the room like vapor, and his gossamer piano touch transforms lightly turned phrases into silk. Unforgettable himself, Freddy's done his older brother proud. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 5: The **TOM VARNER** quintet. Varner gives his still-out-of-the-jazz-mainstream French horn the fluency of a bounding trombone. He's also a versatile composer who has successfully mined the more lyrical suggestions of Ornette Coleman's work. May 6-9: Saxophonist **GREG OSBY,** a professional renegade once associated with the jazz insurgent M-Base organization, hasn't quite returned to the fold. Let's just say he's reinvestigating the glories of the jazz tradition. With his sharp-edged tone and stuttering rhythms, Osby remains one of the least predictable and most engaging alto and soprano saxophonists to have emerged in the past two decades.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through May 9: As one of the "two Franks" (along with Frank Wess) of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Capital and finial in the form of a sphinx, Greek, Attic, ca. 530 B.C., Munsey Fund, 1936, 1938. Background: Mary and Michael Jaharis Gallery. Photos by Bruce White.

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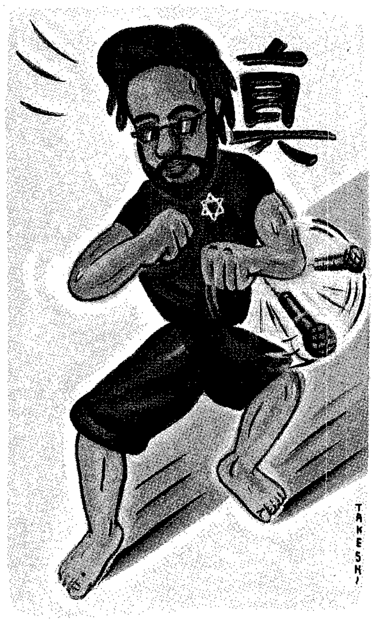
the Count Basie band, tenor saxophonist **FRANK FOSTER** established a reputation as a challenging improviser and a resourceful composer, which stood him in good stead when he came to lead the band in the nineties. Here, a small unit will set off Foster's prodigious gifts as a soloist equally versed in the dialects of swing and modernism. Dining.

TONIC, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—May 5-7: Four players with musically eclectic and ambitious notions as wide-ranging as their record collections come together—saxophonist **JOHN ZORN,** guitarist **MARC RIBOT,** keyboardist **JOHN MEDESKI,** and drummer **KENNY WOLLENSON.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through May 9: The **BRANFORD MARSALIS** quartet. The recent death of Kenny Kirkland, Marsalis's longtime pianist, may shift the carefully calibrated dynamics of the star saxophonist's quartet, but the push-pull interplay that Marsalis has cemented with drummer **JEFF (TAIN) WATTS** will see the band through. The fluent pianist **JOEY CALDERAZZO** steps into the open slot. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.



Dr. Israel, at the Knitting Factory.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Our New Clothes: Acquisitions of the 1990s in the Costume Institute." Through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ "The Mirror of the Medieval World" presents two decades' worth of work acquired by the Cloisters and the Met's department of medieval art. Through July 4. . . . ¶ "Picasso: Painter and Sculptor in Clay." Through June 6. . . . ¶ "Guardians of the Longhouse: Art in Borneo." . . . ¶ "Hans Hofmann at the Metropolitan Museum." . . . ¶ The museum's roof garden reopens with an installation of sculptures, by Magdalena Abakanowicz, which includes her solemn "Backward Seated Figures," with its eleven headless forms turned away from the viewer. . . . ¶ The museum has opened its newly renovated Greek galleries, filled with Attic treasures, Athenian marbles, Archaic pottery, and classical grave reliefs. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Sigmar Polke: Works on Paper, 1963-74." Through June 16. . . . ¶ "Projects 68: William Kentridge" presents "Stereoscope," the latest charcoal-and-pastel animation by the South African artist. Through June 8. . . . ¶ "The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect." Through June 1. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Picasso and the War Years: 1937-1945." Through May 9. . . . ¶ "Photography: An Expanded View" includes works by Cindy Sherman, Anna Gaskell, Rineke Dijkstra, Uta Barth, Andreas Gursky, and Tseng Kwong Chi. Through May 16. . . . ¶ "Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959-69." Through May 16. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The American Century: Art & Culture 1900-2000 (Part I: 1900-50)." The first half of America's mid-career retrospective, installed on all five floors, includes Grant Wood's "American Gothic," Ben Shahn's "The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti," Alfred Stieglitz's "The Steerage," Georgia O'Keeffe's "Summer Days," and Jackson Pollock's "Number 27." Through Aug. 22. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Domestic Transformations: Working in Brooklyn" is a homemaking-themed show by borough artists. Ron Baron's curtain of baseball cards marks the space off, Andy Yoder's softly advancing braided rugs warm it, Jean Blackburn's delicately jigsawed dressers furnish it, and Ann Agee's porcelain figurines people it. Agee, whose previous work includes "Lake Michigan Bathroom," tiled completely in blue-and-white wetland scenes, puts her technique to work here miniaturizing, glazing, and gilding contemporary city dwellers—the neighbors as tchotchkes. Through June 13. . . . ¶ "Mariko Mori: Empty Dream" offers computer-generated photographs and installations by the Japanese artist. Through Aug. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

BRENDA GOODMAN—Enigmatic narratives, painted with a rich, gristly impasto. Several show luminous processions that might be taking place in the twilit meadows of Dante's Purgatory. Others depict a lone figure raising her arms toward a high, bright disk. Though it floats in a molasses-black sky, the disk isn't exactly the moon. Instead, it's a profusion of pure frosting-thick color, like a heavenly cupcake hovering just out of reach. Through May 15. (Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. 288-5888.)

RED GROOMS—What has Red been up to lately? Everything, as usual. This chaotic and delightful show is crowded with watercolors, monoprints, reliefs, and "sculpto-pictoramas," one of which, "The Hot Dog Vendor," is almost ten feet tall. The highlight is an enormous painting of Picasso in his Paris studio, hard at work on—what else?—"Guernica." Beside him, Jaime Sabartes reads the paper, an unidentified woman disrobes, and a stylishly dressed Dora Maar sniffles into a hankie. In the background, Grooms has painted a whimsical, pop-up version of the great gray canvas itself. Through May 22. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays.)

WELDON KEES (1914-55)—A tantalizing show, the first in forty years, by a Renaissance man of the fifties. Better known as a poet and critic than as a painter, Kees created a small body of Abstract Expressionist work before he disappeared near the Golden Gate Bridge in 1955. The paintings here don't measure up to those of Kees's friends Gorky and deKooning, but the family resemblance is strong. Using mostly black and white paints and sand, Kees made images that have an appealing dour elegance. Through June 26. (Gallery Gertrude Stein, 56 W. 57th St. 535-0600.)

JAMES VALERIO—A then-and-now show, pairing recent works with their predecessors from the seventies and eighties. Valerio has always been a remarkable technician, and the drawings are marvels of photorealist verisimilitude. But the paintings keep feinting toward a corny, hesitant Surrealism—as in his image of two nude women levitating above a gorgeously rumpled comforter. When it comes to satin or cellulite, you can't touch Valerio; however, the intellectual underpinnings of these paintings remain vague. Through May 15. (Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

DAISY YOUNGBLOOD—Ravishingly melancholy sculptures of animals—horses, elephants, a pregnant chimpanzee—and one of the late art dealer Richard Bellamy. The Bellamy portrait, with its gimlet eyes and wormlike

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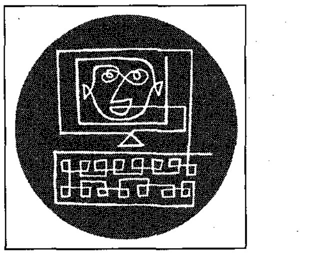
ONLY CONNECT



HIPMAMA (http://www.hipmama.com)—A search for sites related to mothers—or to Mother's Day—can be depressing: it turns up Hallmark images, twee Victoriana, and links to merchandise. How refreshing, then, is this Web counterpart to *hipMama,* the California parenting zine "for parents who didn't check their personalities at the door when their kids were born." Founding editor Ariel Gore is the child of hippie parents, who abandoned the fuzzy thinking ("I never did like the anarchists' free-school") but kept the footloose attitude when it came to rearing her own child. The site is rife with the voices of left-leaning, independent mothers whose aspirations for their kids extend beyond getting them into the best preschools.

HipMama's "parenting community" offers forty-odd discussions on such topics as "The Sleep Thing: Is it cruel to let cry?," and "Antidepressants?" Travel Talk with cheapMama presents package deals and vacation offers for adventurous families, and the new-music reviews (Sleater-Kinney, Liz Phair) reflect users' tastes. (The site also hosts Mother Rock Star, a network of a hundred and fifty moms in the music business.) But it is the quality of the writing that sets hipMama apart. Correspondents from around the country tackle sensitive subjects, like circumcision, and offer ideas for family activities, like making a scrapbook with your kids. Ayun Halliday (author of her own quarterly zine, *East Village Inky*) contributes a scary serialized story about her difficult labor, while the cartoonist Katherine Arnoldi puts the lie to conservative generalizations, in her autobiographical "Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom." Reflecting on the poor self-image of the single welfare mothers she tried to organize in the early nineties, Arnoldi describes how they seemed to believe that "it was they, not Desert Storm or the Savings and Loan bailout, or global changes, that had caused the nation's economic problems."

This site ultimately provides succor to moms who cannot relate to our culture's mawkish notions of motherhood. Yet although it is cool and sometimes sharp, hipMama wears its heart on its Gerber's-stained sleeve, defining "hip" not just as "aware, informed" but also as "a place where young children sit when they're tired of walking."

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body, is unforgettable—but then so are most of the pieces here. The largest, a bronze gorilla, whose body seems to be made of sutured, crumpled planes, like a John Chamberlain sculpture, wears a dismissive expression of bourgeois hauteur reminiscent of Ingres's portrait of Monsieur Bertin. Through May 29. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951.)

SHORT LIST—**BRETT BIGBEE,** De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through June 4. . . . **SUE COE,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through June 5. . . . **REBECCA CUMING** and **VLADIMIR SALAMUN,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-4997. Both shows through June 5. . . . **DAVID HOCKNEY,** Gray, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 472-8787. Through May 28. . . . **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400. Through June 26. (See also Chelsea Short List.) . . . **BRICE MARDEN,** C & M, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020. Through May 29. . . . **PETER POSKAS,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through May 28. . . . **JULIAN SCHNABEL,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through June 5 (See also Galleries—Downtown.) . . . **SEAN SCULLY,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through June 11. . . . **JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through June 5. . . . **CY TWOMBLY,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through June 12.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

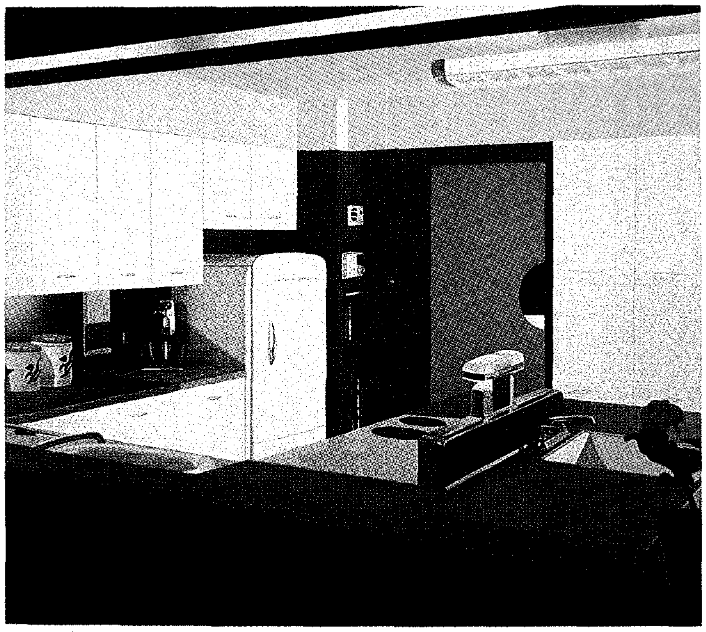
PAUL BLOODGOOD—"Now Wait for Last Year" is a series of oil paintings with varied sources of inspiration. The compositions mimic Jackson Pollock's enamel paintings, the brushwork is modelled on the shimmery strokes of Cézanne, and the palette is limited to only those colors available in the days of Manet. First impressions of links to fifties abstraction give way to more lyrical pleasures as one detects secret passages of fin-de-siècle lines. Bloodgood's pairing of opposing traditions also evokes the intellectual experiments perpetrated by the anti-painting Conceptualists of the seventies. Still, these are not think pieces: the colors buzz, the lines jangle, and even the heady rules that Bloodgood has devised for himself betray his exuberance for paint. Through May 15. (AC Project Room, 453 W. 17th St. 645-4970.)

BOB KNOX—Paintings that capture the design quirks of fifties-era moderne interiors (vast picture windows, pillowed conversation pits, zebra-skin throw rugs). Though the rooms are eerily unpeopled (have the residents gone to their bomb shelters?), they still reveal the sort of minute traces of habitation that can turn a real-estate tour suddenly pathetic: abandoned coffee cups, a magazine tossed on a couch, electric candles left blazing in a dark nook. A strange and persuasive mix of optimism and sterility. Through May 22. (Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701.)

SHORT LIST—**NINA BOVASSO,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through May 15. . . . **CHRISTOPHER BROOKS,** Goldsworthy, 453 W. 17th St. 414-4560. Through May 29. . . . **GARY GISSLER,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through June 5. . . . **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through May 15. . . . **SEAN LANDERS,** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000. Through May 22. . . . **FIONA RAE,** Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through May 28. . . . **GARY STEPHAN,** Baumgartner, 418 W. 15th St. 633-2276. Through May 15.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

PAUL FEELEY (1910-66)—Feeley was the pedagogical eminence in the painting department at Bennington, where he taught Helen Frankenthaler, among others. This show of small- and medium-scale paintings, all from 1962, demonstrates that Feeley was more than just a great teacher. Forms reminiscent of balusters—the artist spoke of them as such—float on solid grounds. They seem to be informed by early modernist abstraction—Jean Arp in particular—as much as by the works of their own day. The images are roughly symmetrical, but slight irregularities produce a pulsating effect, so that they retain allegiance to Clement Greenberg's demand for opticality while betraying a pleasing hint of organic form. Through May 22. (Markey, 55 Vandam St. 627-4446.)


"Let Cool," by Bob Knox, at the Shainman gallery.

JULIAN SCHNABEL—"Plate Paintings: 1978-97." Schnabel's early plate paintings are the works that established him as the brashest, baddest of the American neo-expressionists. Although Schnabel became famous for affixing broken crockery to his pictures, he never limited himself to plates: these works include stag horns, driftwood, chains, and smashed amphorae and other Greco-Roman-like tchotchkes. One extraordinary painting, "The Raft" (1982), includes a bronze tree branch projecting from the canvas, rather like the outstretched arm of the desperate man at the center of Gericault's "The Raft of the Medusa." This show represents the artist at his best. Through June 5. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224.)

FRANZ WEST—Sculptures and installations by this Austrian who is often spoken of as an "artist's artist" but whose work has not travelled well for American audiences. This is one of his most successful shows, incorporating collages, plaster sculptures, and his distinctive furniture. West has always professed an interest in interactivity: hence, his "Internet Bed," on which gallerygoers may browse the Web. A more enigmatic work includes two of his chairs facing a suspended, rough-hewn plaster box. A sign tells visitors that they are free to sit but instructs them not to mess with the box. Through May 22. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

KAREN YASINSKY—"No Place Like Home," a show of film and videos that use stop-motion animation, along with related drawings. All of the short movies feature dolls doing wacky and sometimes inappropriate things in caricatured domestic settings. Yasinsky's work owes a lot to Laurie Simmons and Cindy Sherman and betrays a Surrealist bent for matching humor and creepiness. Through May 15. (Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131.)

SHORT LIST—**NANCY BALLIETT,** Atlantic, 40 Wooster St. 219-3183. Through May 8. . . . **ERIC CHAN AND HEATHER SCHATZ,** Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831. Through June 5. . . . **TRACEY EMIN,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through June 19. . . . **TERESITA FERNÁNDEZ,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through June 1. . . . **GUILLERMO KUITCA,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through June 12. . . . **NANCY RUBINS,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Through June 5. . . . **PETER SORIANO** and **TONY BERLANT,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Both shows through May 28. . . . **LINDA STOJAK,** Haller, 560 Broadway. 219-2500. Through June 8.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S—May 5: Paintings, drawings, and sculptures from the nineteenth century, including works on Orientalist themes and others from the Belle Époque. . . . ¶ May 6: French furniture. . . . ¶ May 10: Impressionist and modern art from the celebrated collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney, including important works by Cézanne, Seurat, Berthe Morisot, and Picasso. . . . ¶ May 11: The first day of a sale of Impressionist and modern art, with especially notable pieces by Monet (including one of his thirty-two haystack paintings and one from his Rouen Cathedral series) and Klee. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S—May 5: Vincennes and Sèvres porcelain. . . . ¶ May 6: A single-owner sale of fifteen nineteenth-century European paintings, six of them by Gérôme. . . . ¶ May 6: Fine and collectible wines. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

PHILLIPS—Impressionist, modern, and contemporary paintings and tapestries. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. May 11 at 2.)

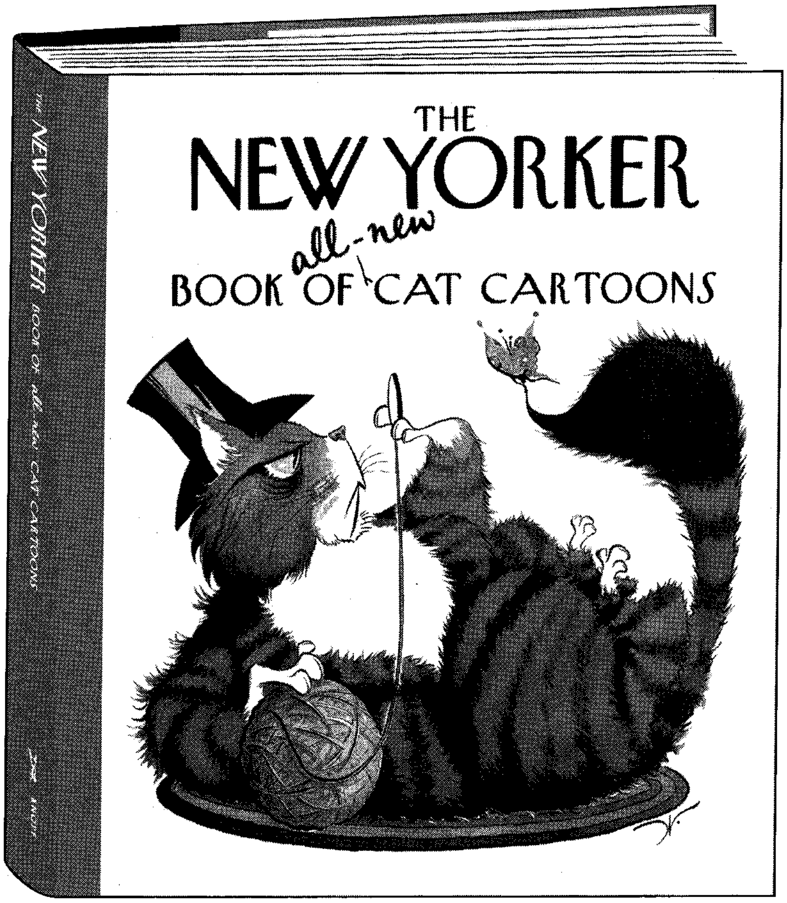
DOYLE—Sales of books, autographs, and photographs, and of Old Master, modern, and contemporary prints. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. May 5.)

INTERNATIONAL FINE ART FAIR—Sixty-nine exhibitors offer paintings from the Renaissance to the present day, along with a smattering of pieces in other mediums. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. May 7-12, with a benefit preview on May 6. For information, call 877-0202.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ANDREW MOORE—Large-scale, wonderfully detailed color interiors and exteriors made in Havana during the past year. Whereas Moore once focussed on the rewarding but sometimes cold glories of architecture, now he is entranced by the relationship between the beautiful, resilient Cubans and their half-ruined drawing rooms, kitchens, and courtyards. Through May 15. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

MORE cat cartoons!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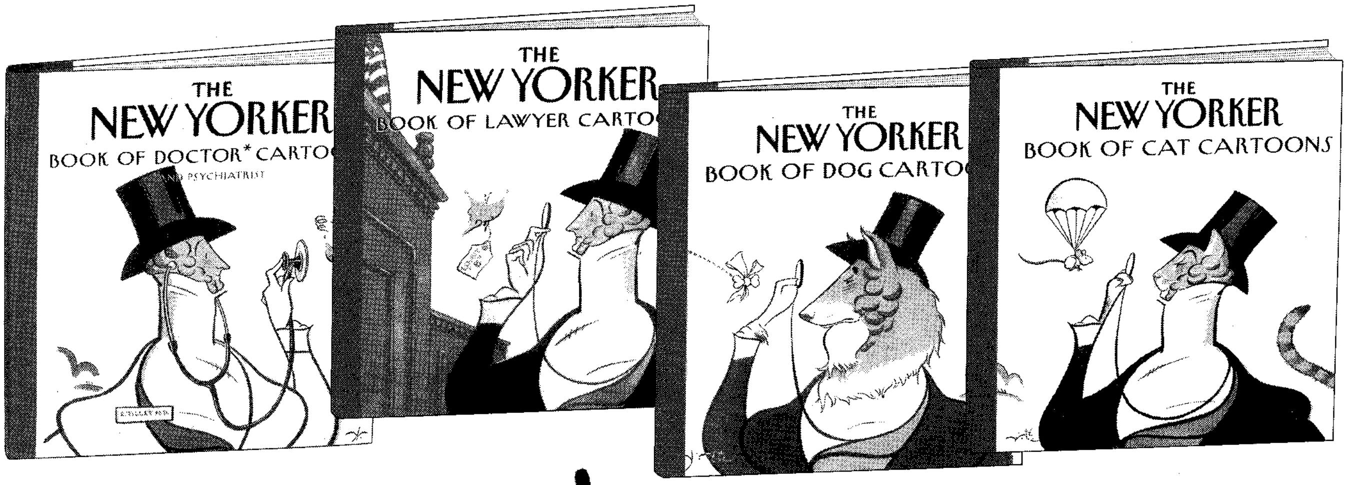
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Eliot Porter (1901-90)—Rare vintage dye-transfer prints by a resolute wilderness preservationist and one of the most important pioneers of serious color photography. Through May 15. (Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays.)

"Flashback: The Sixties"—A jam-packed group show of striking images, some well known and many surprisingly fresh, from that vexed decade; it's infinitely more satisfying than any TV miniseries or coffee-table compendium. The Camelot clique, the Rat Pack, and the Beatles are all here, side by side with Jimmy Hoffa (and his sinister grin), Gloria Steinem (as a coy Playboy Bunny), Jasper Johns (beaming at an opening), Janis Joplin (about to polish off a fifth of Southern Comfort), and Bob Dylan (Sphinx-like on the trunk of an old car). Among the photographers on view are Flip Schulke, William Klein, Alexander Liberman, Benedict J. Fernandez, and Diane Arbus. Through May 8. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"Hungary Today: 5 Contemporary Photographers"—A survey of recent work by Gabor Kerekes, Zsolt Peter Barta, Lenke Szilagyi, Judit M. Horvath, and Gyorgy Stalter. Through June 12. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.)

Short List—**dieter appelt** and **john szarkowski**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through June 12. . . . **jeannette montgomery barron**, Scalo, 560 Broadway. 334-9393. Through May 25. . . . **werner bischof**, Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through May 15. . . . **marilyn bridges**, SoHo Triad Fine Arts, 107 Grand St. 965-9500. Open daily; through June 6. . . . **thomas joshua cooper**, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through June 19. . . . **willie doherty**, Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474. Through June 12. . . . **roe etheridge**, Kustera, 41 Wooster St. 965-1527. Through May 22. . . . **nat fein**, Goldstein, 39 Wooster St. 431-0314. Through May 15. . . . **frank gohlke** and **stuart klipper**, Dorsky, 379 West Broadway. 966-6170. Through June 26. . . . **dana hoey**, Petzel, 26 Wooster St. 334-9466. Through May 29. . . . **vera lutter**, Roth Horowitz, 160a E. 70th St. 717-9067. Through May 22. . . . **laurent millet**, Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. . . . **tracey moffatt**, Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2753. Through June 25. . . . **william mortensen**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through June 26. . . . **hank o'neal**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Through May 22. . . . **john patrick salisbury**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through May 15. . . . **toshio shibata**, Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Through May 27. . . . **jeanloup sieff**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through May 8.

(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

OPERA

Amato Opera Company—Final performances of "The Magic Flute," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 8 at 7:30 and May 9 at 2:30. . . . **note:** On May 8 at 11:30 a.m., the company offers an abridged family version of the same opera.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. May 6 and May 8 at 8, May 7 at 2, and May 11 at 7:30: Christopher Rouse's "Seeing," for piano and orchestra, owes its existence to a good deed. Some years ago, the pianist Emanuel Ax coached a group of master-class students at a small conservatory on Long Island and afterward refused payment for his services. Lillian and Maurice Barbash, a couple who lived in the area, decided that Mr. Ax's generosity should not go unrewarded and offered to commission a major work for him to perform with the New York Philharmonic. He selected Mr. Rouse as the composer with whom he would like to collaborate, and the piece is now ready for its première. Ironically, its title refers to a song by the rock musician Skip Spence, who died in mid-April; the composer reports that the work explores how mentally delusional people may perceive music, using Mr. Spence and Robert Schumann as inspirations. Also on the program are Richard Strauss's "Burleske" for piano and orchestra and Sibelius's Symphony No. 5. . . . ¶ May 8 at 2: A Young People's Concert that includes Mr. Rouse's "The Infernal Machine."

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost leads the orchestra and the Orpheon Chorale in Vivaldi's oratorio "Juditha Triumphans." (Alice Tully Hall. May 5 at 7:30.)

Russian Chamber Chorus of New York—The choir takes a brief detour from its core repertoire by performing recent sacred works by non-Russian composers: Victor Copytsko (from Belarus), John Tavener (from England), Arvo Pärt (from Estonia), and Feliksas Bajoras (from Lithuania). Nikolai Kachanov directs. (St. Ignatius' Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. May 5 at 8. For information about tickets, call 718-445-5799.)

Cleveland Orchestra—At Carnegie Hall. May 5 at 8: Pierre Boulez conducts an all-Ravel program, comprising four of the composer's arrangements from his piano pieces (the "Menuet Antique," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Une Barque sur l'Océan," and "Alborada del Gracioso") and a concert version of his opera "L'Heure Espagnole" (with the cast including mezzo-soprano Ruxandra Donose, tenor John Aler, and baritone Rodney Gilfry). . . . ¶ May 6 at 8: Mr. Boulez leads Debussy's "Trois Ballades de François Villon" (with soprano Alison Hagley), "Le Jet d'Eau," and "Danses Sacrée et Profane" (featuring harpist Lisa Wellbaum), in addition to Ravel's "Pavane pour une Infante Défunte" and a concert version of his opera "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges" (with mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer as the Child). . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: Christoph von Dohnányi, the orchestra's music director, conducts Brahms's Symphony No. 3 and a concert version of Bartók's "Bluebeard's Castle" (with mezzo-soprano Cornelia Kallisch and baritone Robert Hale). . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: Mr. von Dohnányi leads Mahler's Symphony No. 9.

Bachanalia Chamber Orchestra—The ensemble offers works by Bach, Bruch (his "Kol Nidre"), Ives, and Schubert (an orchestral transcription of the "Death and the Maiden" String Quartet). (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 260-2799.)

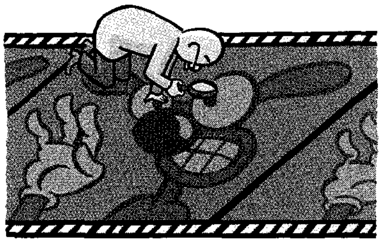
Amor Artis—The chorus is joined by several soloists and the University of British Columbia Symphonic Wind Ensemble in music by Stravinsky: his "Symphony of Psalms," Mass, Octet, and "Symphonies of Wind Instruments." Johannes Somary and Martin Berinbaum share the conducting duties. (St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. May 8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4513.)

Concerto Palatino—The European cornetto-and-sackbut ensemble is featured in two concerts. May 9 at 8: A program of late-Renaissance and early-Baroque wind music from Italy and Germany. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 358-1469.) . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: Dennis Keene directs Concerto Palatino, the Voices of Ascension chorus and orchestra, and soloists Kathy Theil and Susanne Peck (sopranos) and Steven Tharp (tenor) in Monteverdi's "Vespers of 1610." (Alice Tully Hall.)

BOOK CURRENTS

'Tooned In

Discussing the early, ink-stained years of film animation in his just-published **Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age** (Oxford), Michael Barrier notes that "animated cartoons had always been a cinematic afterthought." Despite decades of animated features from Disney, Warner Bros., and Hanna-Barbera, Barrier's observation is still valid, as cartoons continue to occupy uneasy territory—between television and cinema, kids and adults, entertainment and art. Even so, Barrier's thorough history of the medium's development, from Winsor McCay's "How a Mosquito Operates" (1912) to the manic Looney Tunes of Warner Bros., offers proof that cartoons still exert a powerful hold on us. Several other recent books chart the evolution of cartoons and how we perceive them.



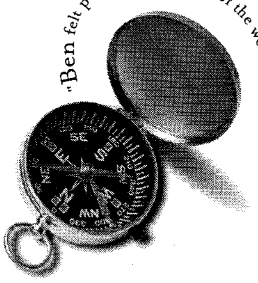
CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

What makes Looney Tunes so loony is the focus of **Reading the Rabbit** (Rutgers), an omnivorous collection of essays edited by Kevin S. Sandler. We learn, for example, how Bugs Bunny's cross-dressing illustrates various gender issues, and how Warner Bros. vaulted over Disney in the esteem of film critics who compared Tex Avery, the creator of Porky Pig, to Buñuel. Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera, who worked alongside Avery at M-G-M in the forties, have often been accused of diluting the quality of animation. But as Michael Mallory's appropriately eye-popping **Hanna-Barbera Cartoons** (Hugh Lauter Levin) makes evident, Hanna-Barbera redefined the look of animation in the Jet Age and led cartoons straight into prime-time television with "The Jetsons" and their Stone Age counterparts, "The Flintstones."

Hanna-Barbera also helped make Saturday morning the kingdom of "kidvid," as Timothy and Kevin Burke point out in **Saturday Morning Fever** (St. Martin's). In this rhapsodic viewer's guide, the Burkes relive the seventies, when "Hong Kong Phooey" and "Inch High, Private Eye"—and the lunchboxes they inspired—were hot property. Now that members of the Saturday-morning generation have grown up to create their own cartoons ("The Tick," "The Ren & Stimpy Show"), the Burkes offer no apologies for their love of the genre, or for their childhoods spent "staring at television sets with slack jaws and glassy eyes."

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]



"Ben felt poised on the cusp of the world, as close to God as he might ever get, with no place higher than heaven itself."

—Excerpt from *East of the Mountains*

EAST OF THE MOUNTAINS

by David Guterson

From the author of the bestselling *Snow Falling on Cedars*, winner of the 1994 Barnes & Noble *Discover Great New Writers* Award, and the 1995 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction comes a compelling novel of a man caught between the desire to die and his passion for life. Ben Givens, a terminally ill heart surgeon, undertakes a journey across the mythic American West. Convinced he has nothing to lose, Ben is about to learn just how much he has to offer—because ultimately, getting there is just the beginning.
(Harcourt Brace)

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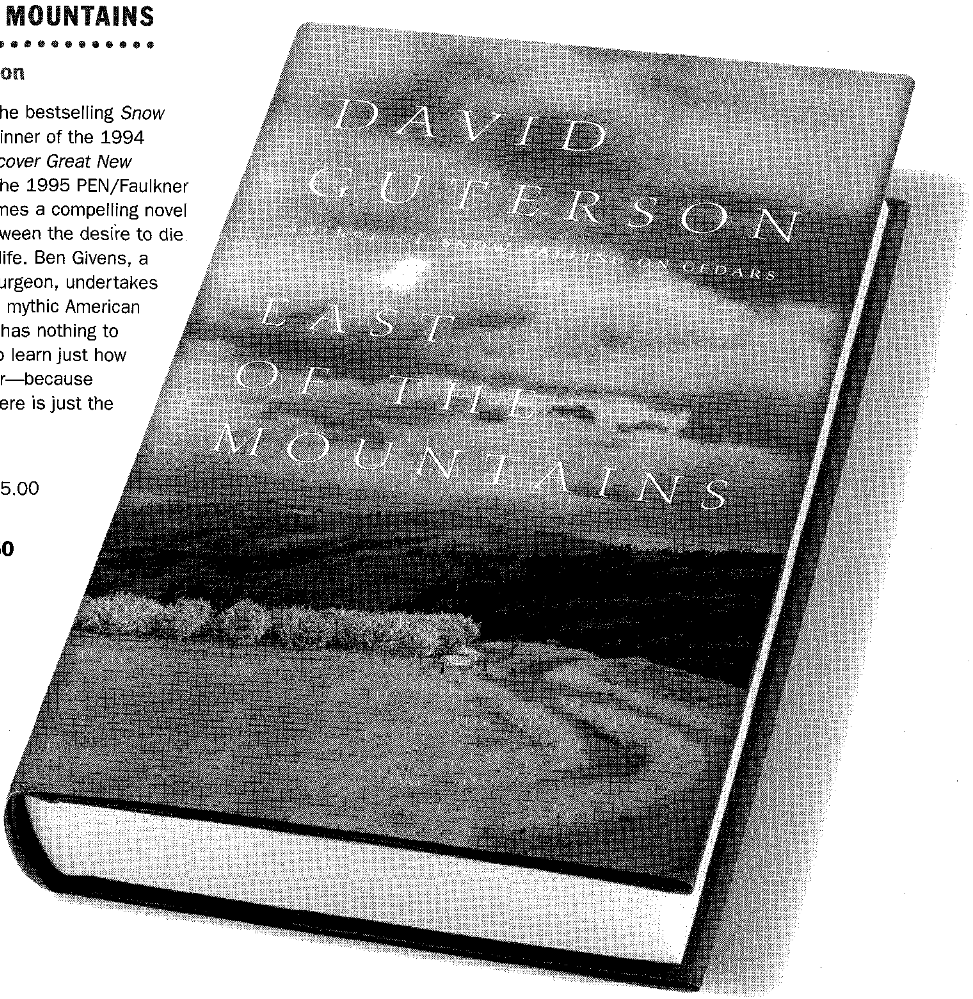

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard leads Handel's A-Minor Concerto Grosso (Op. 6, No. 4), Robert Casedesus's Capriccio (featuring pianist Seymour Lipkin), and Brahms's Symphony No. 1. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. May 10 at 2 and 7 and May 11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Concordia Orchestra—Marin Alsop leads Richard Einhorn's oratorio "Voices of Light," with the New Amsterdam Singers, Anonymous 4, and several soloists. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 10 at 8.)

RECITALS

Mendelssohn String Quartet—The foursome plays and discusses (with radio broadcaster Robert Sherman) movements from pieces it has performed at Merkin Concert Hall since being formed at that institution (as the Hebrew Arts Quartet), nearly two decades ago. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 5 at 2.)

Pierre Boulez, conducting the Cleveland Orchestra in a pair of all-French concerts, at Carnegie Hall.

Bang on a Can—The annual contemporary-music festival concludes with a performance by the Fred Frith electric-guitar quartet (May 5) and an evening of percussion works by Xenakis (May 6). (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets, call 269-4849.)

Rialto Ensemble—This period-instrument vocal and instrumental ensemble performs works from the France of Louis XIV, with readings from period letters and memoirs interwoven among the musical selections. (Riverside Church, tenth floor; enter at 91 Claremont Ave. May 5-6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 479-8561.)

Bargemusic—Cellist Maureen McDermott and pianist Steven Prutsman perform Piazzolla's "The Grand Tango," and violinist Benny Kim joins them for piano trios by Mozart (in E Major, K. 542) and Shostakovich (in E Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. May 6 at 7:30 and May 9 at 4.)

Festival Chamber Music Society—The ensemble plays Mozart's Sonata in B-Flat Major for Bassoon and Cello (K. 292), Martinů's Four Madrigals (for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon), a piece by Pierre-Max Dubois, and d'Indy's Clarinet Trio. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 6 at 8.)

New York Chamber Ensemble—Performing Hindemith's Kammermusik No. 1, two pieces by Carlos Surinach, and a reconstruction of the original version, for a large chamber group, of Brahms's D-Major Serenade. (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. May 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 870-2439.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—Performing Mozart's "Kegelstatt" Trio, Milhaud's Suite (for clarinet trio), and a new work by John Carbon. (Weill Recital Hall. May 6 at 8.)

1924—It was a very good year, at least for music, and composer David Noon takes note of that fact by leading a biennial seminar at the Manhattan School of Music about that year's concert life. To conclude this semester's go-round, students from the class don period attire to perform pieces written in 1924 by Chávez, Stravinsky, Gershwin, Varèse, and others. (Hubbard Recital Hall, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. May 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Violinist Cho-Liang Lin and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott perform Prokofiev's Violin Sonata No. 1, Lynn Harrell and Ms. McDermott offer Tobias Picker's Suite for Cello and Piano, and all three join for Schubert's Piano Trio in B-Flat Major. (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 at 8 and May 9 at 5.)

Wendy Hoffman—The mezzo-soprano performs songs and arias by Monteverdi, Rossini, Debussy, Wagner, and Brahms (his "Ophelia-lieder," WoO 22), with pianist Earl Buys assisting. (Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, 28 E. 20th St. May 8 at 2. No tickets required beyond museum admission.)

Kristina Cooper and Ilan Rechtman—The cellist and the pianist perform three concerts in two venues. May 9 at noon: Works by Bach, Chopin, and Mr. Rechtman. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478.) . . . ¶ May 9 at 6 and 8: Cello sonatas by Debussy and Brahms (in E Minor). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Scott Dunn—The pianist offers a program of concert works by composers who are also noted for their achievements in popular songwriting and jazz, including pieces by Bolcom, Vernon Duke, Lukas Foss, Ervin Schulhoff, and Richard Rodney Bennett (who assists in four two-piano fantasies derived by Gregory Stone from Gershwin songs). (Weill Recital Hall. May 9 at 2.)

Vladimir Spivakov—The violinist, who was recently named music director of the Russian National Orchestra, performs sonatas by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 96) and Strauss, Schubert's A-Minor Sonatine (D. 385), and Arvo Pärt's "Fratres." Pianist Kun Woo Paik assists. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 9 at 3.)

Joseph Kalichstein—The pianist performs and discusses works by C. P. E. Bach, in a casual setting. (BAMcafé, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. May 9 at 5. No tickets necessary.)

Chamber Players of the League/I.S.C.M.—Presenting solo and chamber works by Harold Oliver, Forrest Pierce, Wayne Peterson, Fred Lerdahl, Mel Powell, and Melinda Wagner. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 10 at 8.)

Haskell Small—Pianist, performing his own "Symphony for Solo Piano," in addition to pieces by Gershwin, Federico Mompou, and two Stravinskys: father Igor and son Soulima. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 10 at 8.)

Thomas Studebaker—The tenor, a member of the Metropolitan Opera's Young Artist Development Program, performs songs by Copland, Joseph Marx, Duparc, Fauré, and Strauss. Pianist Howard Watkins assists. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 10 at 8.)

Elkina Duo—The Russian piano duo of identical twins Julia and Irina Elkina, performing works by Mozart, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, and Lutoslawski (his "Variations on a Theme by Paganini"). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 11 at 2.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—The group's springtime Baroque series continues with a program that consists of Handel's F-Major Concerto Grosso (Op. 6, No. 2), Pachelbel's ubiquitous Canon (at least attached here to its companion Gigue), and triple concertos (for various instrumental groups) by Vivaldi, Telemann, and Bach. (Temple Emanu-El, Fifth Ave. at 65th St. May 11 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Keith Toth—The organist performs pieces by Bach, Duruflé, and Poulenc. (Brick Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 91st St. May 11 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

Exploring Melodramas—Pianist Pavlina Dokovska and the Perspectives Ensemble (conducted by Jeffrey Milarsky) perform two melodramas—that is, works for narrator with a continuous musical underpinning: Richard Strauss's "Enoch Arden" (a setting of Tennyson's poem, narrated by Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.) and Aaron Jay Kernis's "The Goblin Market" (with a text by Christina Rossetti, here read by the opera singer Lauren Flanigan). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 11 at 8.)

American String Quartet—The foursome offers Beethoven's Quartets in F Minor (Op. 95) and B-Flat Major (Op. 130, with the "Grosse Fuge" attached), as well as Barber's String Quartet. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. May 11 at 8.)

New York Consort of Viols—Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century works from France and England. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. May 11 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Alberto Reyes—The Uruguayan pianist performs Chopin's Polonaise-Fantaisie (Op. 61), F-Minor Fantasie (Op. 49), and Ballade No. 4, in addition to Schumann's C-Major Fantasy and "Kinderszenen." (Merkin Concert Hall. May 11 at 8.)

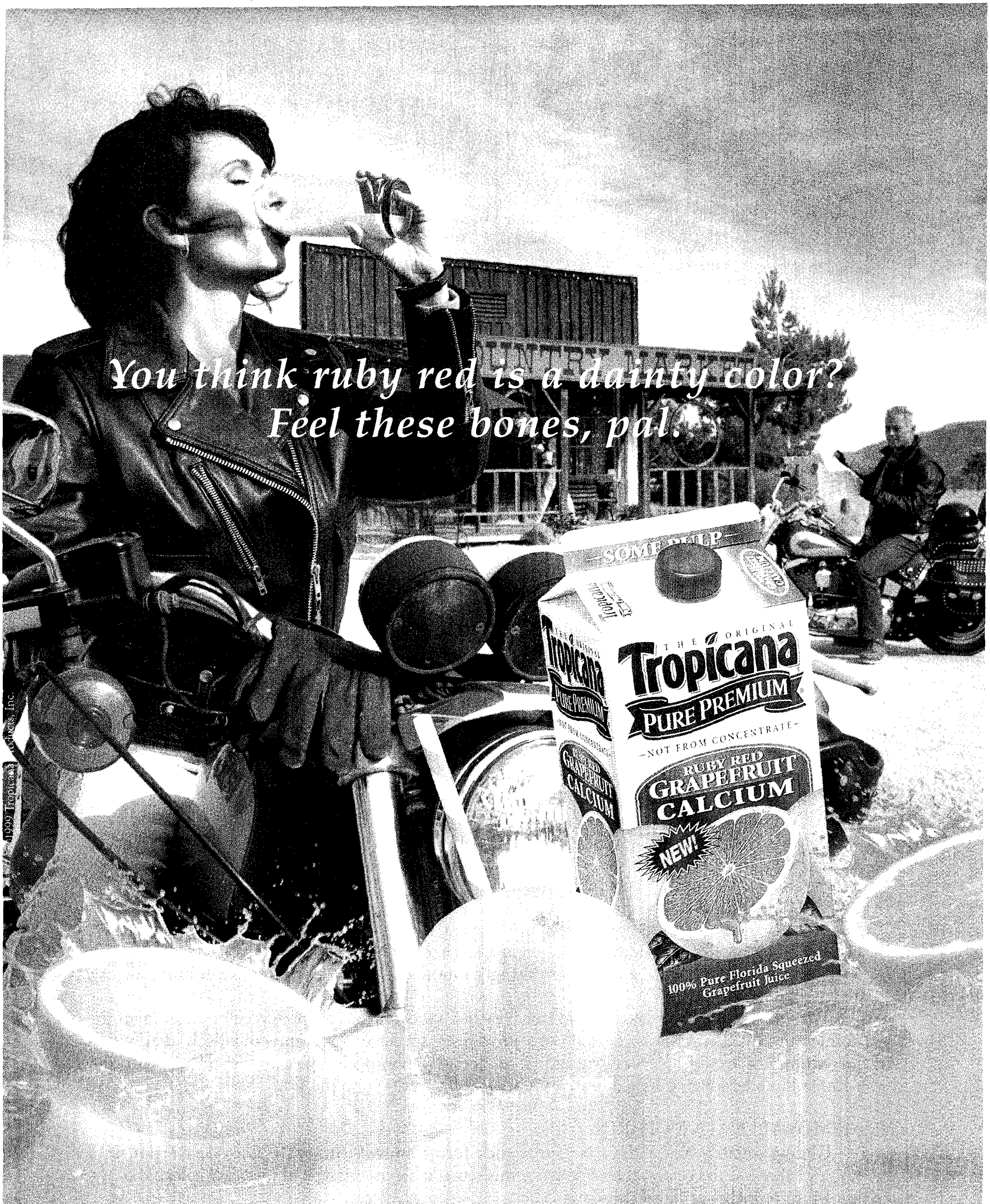
Louisiana Sinfonietta—A seven-member chamber group, performing works by the modern Greek composers Dinos Constantinides, Manos Hadjidakis, and Nikos Skalkottas, in addition to pieces inspired by Greek myth, by Handel, Gluck, and Niccolò Piccini. (Weill Recital Hall. May 11 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Readings—May 5 at 6:30: By actors Helen-Jean Arthur and Aasif Mandvi, from the short stories of Bertolt Brecht, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Richard Dooling. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ May 6 at 6: By poet Philip Levine. (Riverside Branch Library, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 6 at 7: By Nathan Englander, from his short-story collection, "For the Relief of Unbearable Urges." (Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 10 at 6:30: Louis Auchincloss, Pete Hamill, Frank McCourt, and others offer a staged reading of a play about the 1849 Astor Place riot, written by Andrew Davis. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. For more information, call 534-1672, ext. 257.)

Talk—May 6 at 8: Edward Mendelson, author of "Later Auden," discusses the poet. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.)

Tour—May 8, from 1 to 5: The residents of five houses in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District open their doors for self-guided tours. For more information, call 718-858-9193.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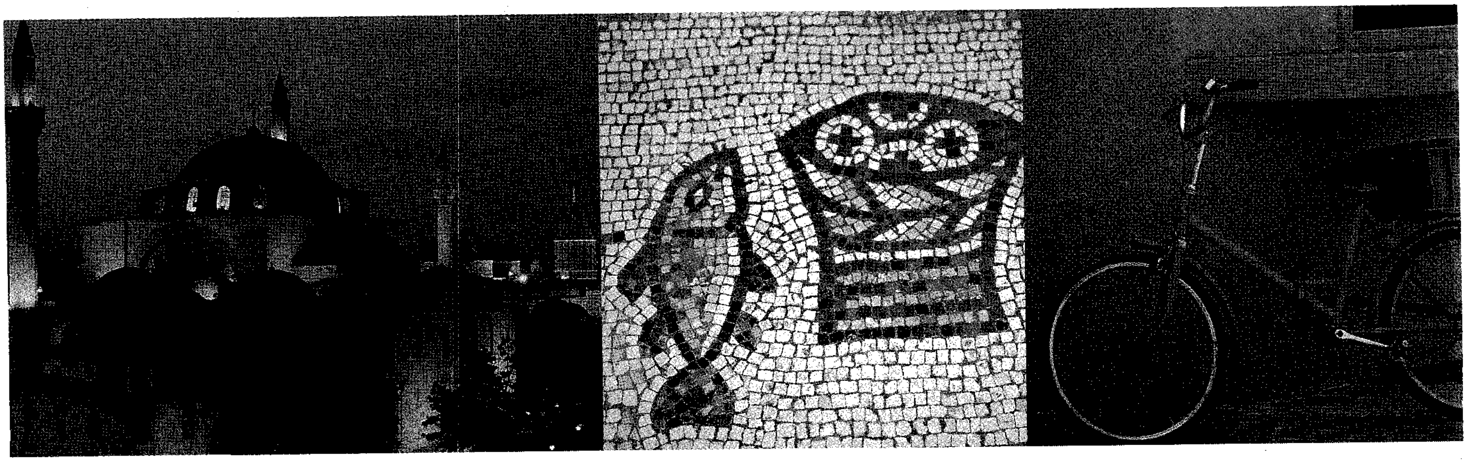
THE TIMELESS MEDITERRANEAN

WHERE NORTH AFRICA MEETS THE MIDDLE EAST

by Lauren Price and Keith Yazmir



Time takes on a whole new meaning as you venture east in the Mediterranean. Sailing past sun-drenched North African villages, diving off the coast of Cyprus, or floating through Turkey's orange-dawn light in a hot-air balloon, you can forget about time—it virtually doesn't exist. Conversely, you can speed up time by dancing the night away and frolicking among the glitterati in Eilat, Israel's Riviera. You can journey back in time by exploring the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity or by immersing yourself in traditional North African or Middle Eastern cultures. Or, you can simply savor time over a five-course dinner at an Istanbul restaurant. And when you return home, you will carry mementos of your own special time in the form of local wares from a traditional souk stall or Israeli street market.

ISLAND HOPPING

Alluring beaches, turquoise waters, and ancient ruins are fitting ingredients for a vacation paradise. But beyond this idealized stereotype, each of the myriad islands that dot the eastern Mediterranean reveals itself to be a surprisingly unique oasis with a distinctive culture, history, and ambiance.

The whitewashed architecture and sun-bleached sand beaches of the Cyclades make them the quintessential Greek islands. Lush Naxos provides a spectacularly scenic and lively destination for swimming, exploring, and luxuriating, as does the photogenic volcanic island of Santorini, with its jumbled towns perched dramatically on cliffs overlooking the sea.

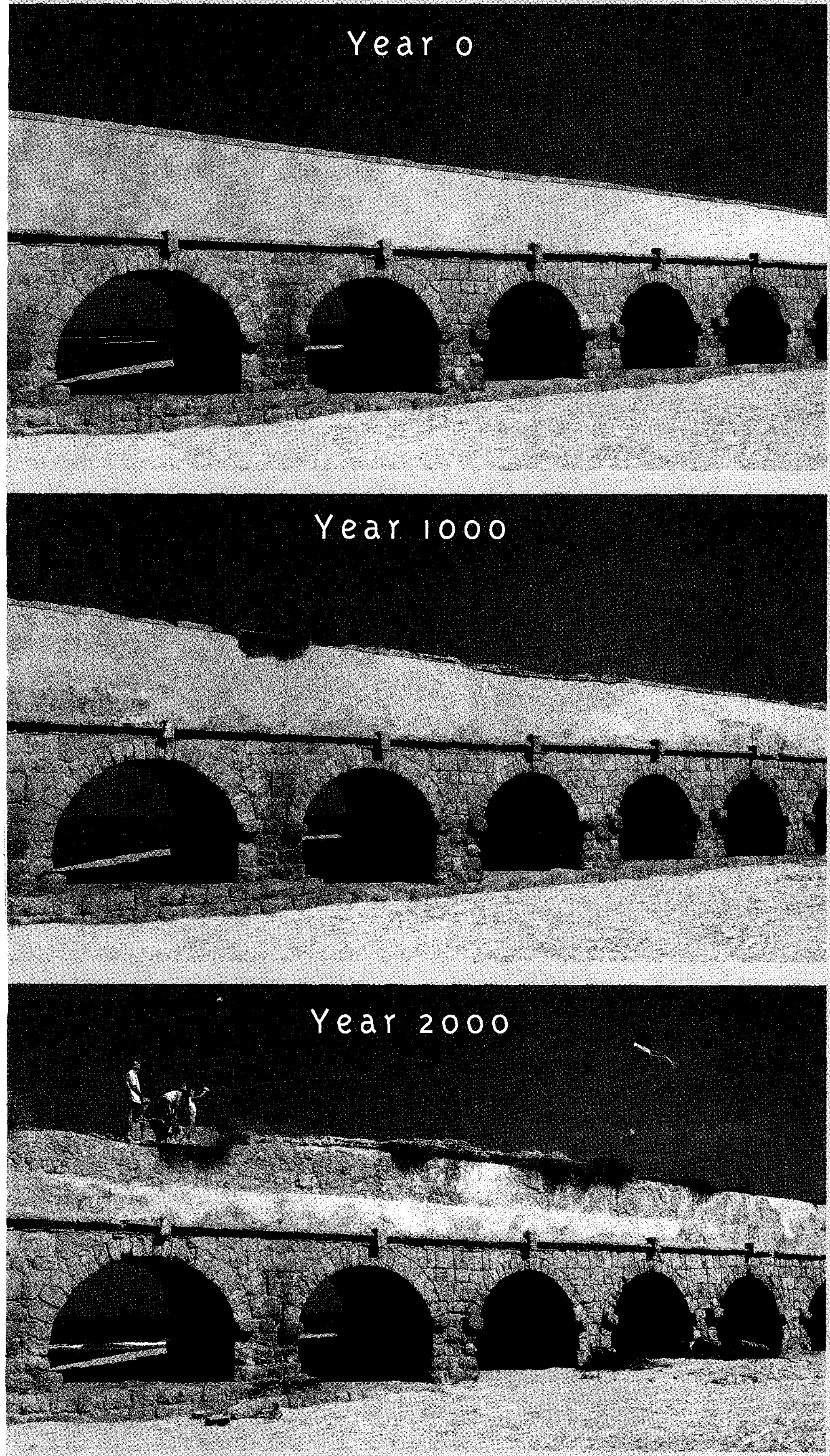
MEMORABLE ADVENTURES

Gliding serenely above the spectacular rock formations of Turkey's Cappadocia region in a hot-air balloon is the best way to experience this remarkable moonscape of towering volcanic cones, known to residents as "fairy chimneys."

Beyond the beautiful beaches and vibrant nightlife of Israel's Eilat, stunning tropical fish and coral reefs lie just below the calm, clear water, accessible to everyone from the novice snorkeler to the skilled diver. For those who prefer staying dry, a glass-walled underwater observatory affords dramatic views of the Red Sea port's marine life.

Morocco's stark desert beauty and surprisingly lush oases can be effectively surveyed from atop a camel. Exploring at a camel's languorous pace is perhaps the best way to discover the sweeping

Come to the land where time began.



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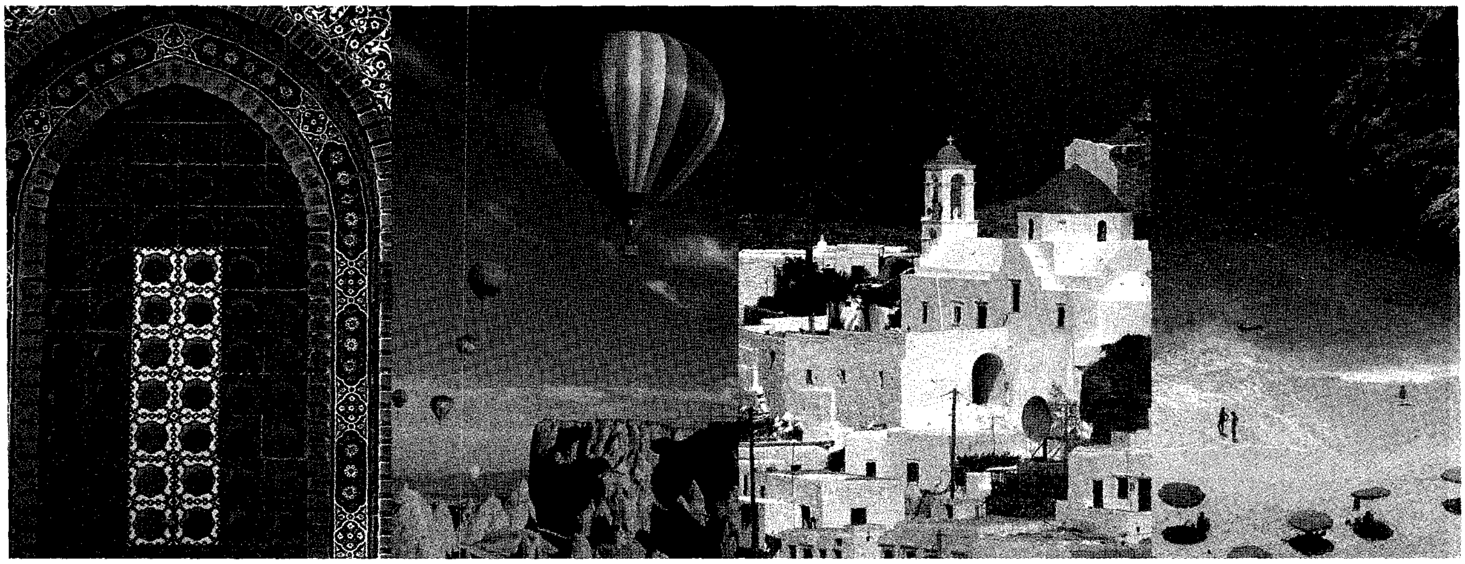

Cover left to right: Turkey's Selimiye Mosque, third-century mosaic in Galilee, Tel Aviv; this page: Dome of the Rock in Old City, Cappadocia, Greek isle, Kaputas Beach in Turkey.

Sahara Desert and dramatic Drâa Valley. The southeastern town of Zagora is a good base from which to organize your trip.

The Turkish bath is undoubtedly one of the eastern Mediterranean's finest traditions. Feel tension melt away in the steamy heat before luxuriating in a vigorous massage and scrub. *Hamams* (bath establishments) are available in most major Turkish cities and towns, as well as in the northern part of Cyprus, and at countless locations throughout the Muslim Mediterranean.

WHERE TIME BEGAN

It is a mystery exactly why, for more than five thousand years, the Mediterranean has served as crucible for many of the world's most powerful empires and influential religions. But whatever the reason, even the most jaded of travelers can't help but be impressed by the omnipresent reminders of civilization's rich history.

Many of the best-preserved classical ruins, such as the ancient city of Ephesus, can be found along Turkey's western and southern coasts. Istanbul's soaring Blue Mosque hosts summer evening concerts. But the eastern Mediterranean is much more than a monolithic museum. It's a living relic of the past that invites fresh exploration.

Israel, home to the events that inspired our current calendar, has already begun commemorating the arrival of the millennium. From the newly refurbished Ramparts Walk atop Jerusalem's walls—with its views of the Old City's jumble of ancient rooftops, spires, and minarets—to the newly restored and pedestrianized Nazareth city center, the Holy Land is marking the Year 2000 with restorations, concerts, and ceremonies.

SAVVY SHOPPING

With its intricate blend of European, Asian, and African influences, the Mediterranean represents both a shopper's paradise and a shopping challenge.

In Morocco, exotic perfumes and spices can be found along the tangled streets of Tangier's Old Medina. Unpretentious tiny shops in Rabat are excellent sources for kilim rugs, with their striking patterns and contrasts. And the markets of Marrakesh provide an inexpensive and fascinating place to negotiate how many dirham you're willing to pay for local wares such as decorative ornamental brass.

In Istanbul, a talent for *pazarlik* (bargaining) will serve you well at the covered medieval bazaar, Kapali Çarşi. Its four thousand shops twist through virtually three miles of streets, allowing shoppers to browse for hours for coveted objects like finely carved pipes made of meerschaum or handcrafted gold jewelry.

SAVORY DINING

Combine the Mediterranean's incredibly fresh ingredients and its vibrant North African and Middle Eastern traditions and one emerges with a medley of flavors.

Moroccan cuisine has evolved out of the country's Berber, Arabic, French, and Spanish traditions. *Tajines* (meat and vegetable stews) are wonderful fusions of fresh produce and exotic spices cooked slowly in earthenware. Homemade couscous with tender morsels of lamb is a fluffy revelation. And a pastry called *pastilla* with chicken, almonds, cinnamon, and saffron is a local delicacy.

In Athens, gyros from giant skewers and souvlakia wrapped in freshly baked pita with just the right measure of *tzatziki* (a yogurt, cucumber, and garlic dip) tease the palate. A journey to Crete allows for the ultimate indulgence—*pastitsio* (macaroni and meat in a béchamel sauce).

Turkish food has been referred to as the French cuisine of the east. Perfectly grilled, skewered lamb (a Turkish creation) is a popular choice. And *döner kebap* (lamb packed onto a vertical revolving spit and sliced off when done) is the ultimate fast-food snack. For the most luscious of desserts, there is *firin sütlaç* (baked rice pudding).

The very best trips provide an experience that opens the mind, enlarges the perspective, and lingers long afterwards in memory. With such a diverse medley of cultures, histories, and natural wonders, the timeless Mediterranean offers savvy travelers thousands of exciting options, custom-tailored to every taste and style.

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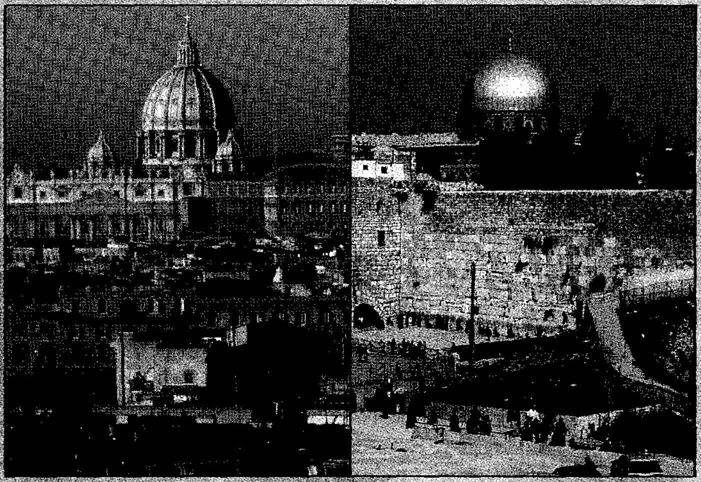

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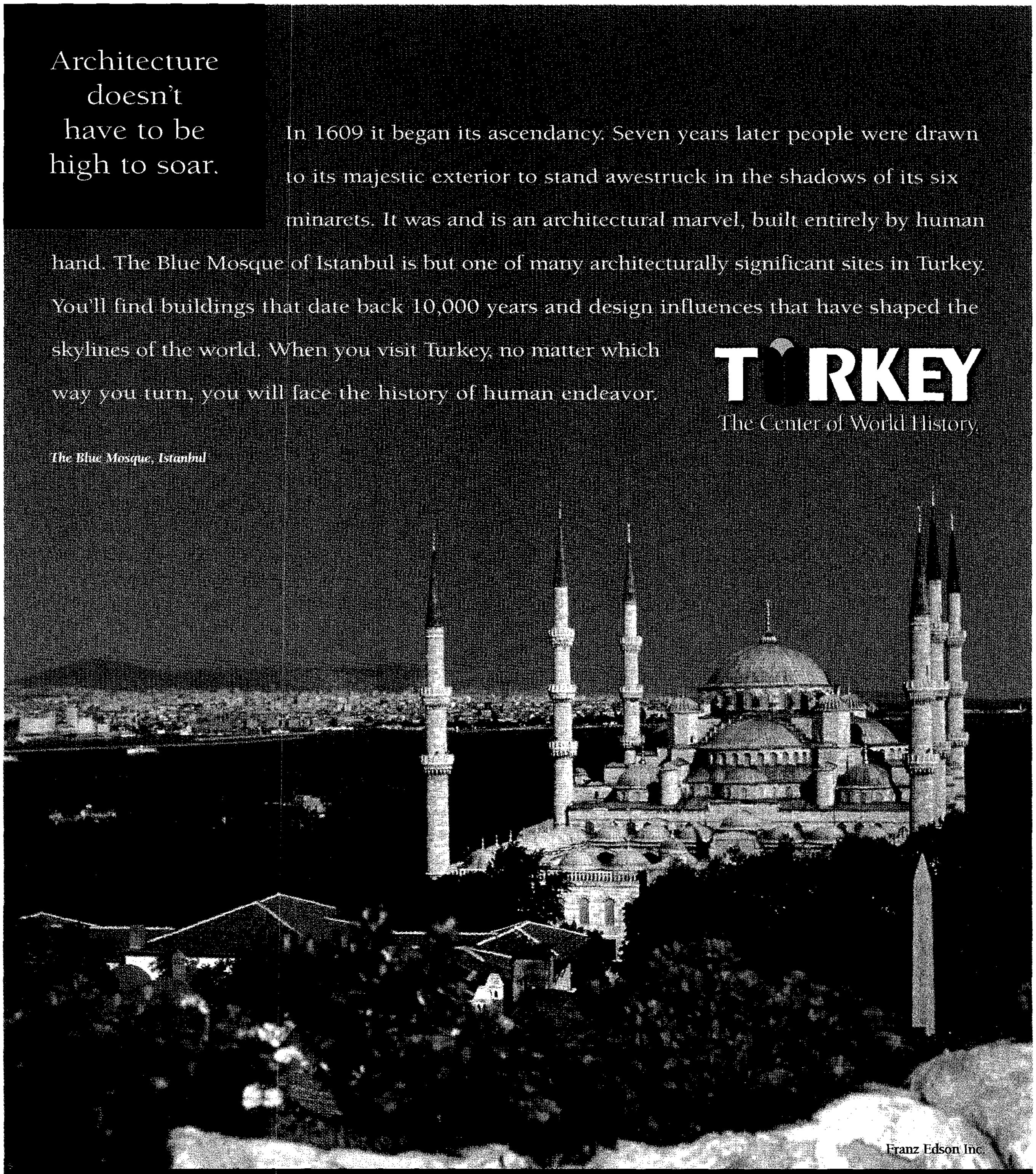
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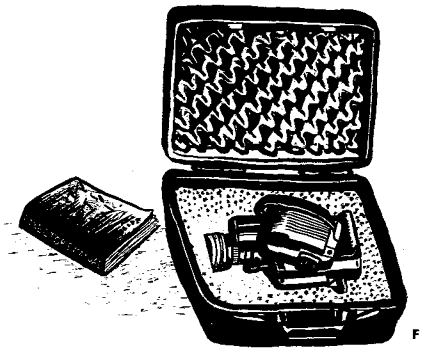


THE MOVIES

OPENING

The Castle—Rob Sitch's film about an Australian family man's struggle to save his home from developers. Opening May 7. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Fare Games—The story of two New York city taxi-drivers and the women in their lives. Directed by Brian O'Hara. Opening May 7. (Quad Cinema.)

The Mummy—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 7.

Pusher—A movie about a Copenhagen drug dealer, directed by Nicolas Winding Refn. In Danish. Opening May 7. (Cinema Village.)

This Is My Father—A Chicago teacher (James Caan) goes to Ireland in search of the father he never knew (Aidan Quinn). Written and directed by Paul Quinn. Opening May 7. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Village Theatre VII.)

Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl—Joan Chen directs this tale of a young Chinese girl's struggles to return to her home town. In Mandarin. Opening May 7. (Eastside Playhouse, Metro Cinema, and Village East Cinemas.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, *the date of its review is given.)*

Analyze This—You can see the jokes coming well in advance, but you still laugh. Robert De Niro is the mafia boss who is having panic attacks at crucial moments, and Billy Crystal is the mild, bored little shrink who becomes his doctor and friend. What makes the film so effective is that the two men form a real bond—each fulfills some need in the other. Directed by Harold Ramis.—*David Denby* (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Cookie's Fortune—Robert Altman, in a benevolent mood, has made a lovely ensemble comedy from Anne Rapp's original screenplay about the fate of an inheritance—the house and jewels left behind by one Cookie Orcutt (Patricia Neal), a fine old lady in a small Mississippi town who misses her dead husband so much that she refuses to spend any more time away from him. Cookie's mad nieces (Glenn Close and Julianne Moore) rearrange the evidence of Cookie's suicide so that it looks like a murder, allowing suspicion to fall on a hard-drinking but amiable black man (Charles S. Dutton) who lives in Cookie's guest house. But the movie is not the usual protest against racism; on the contrary, the town works like the kind of happy, quarrelsome extended family in which people have put up with one another's foibles for years.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Dreamlife of Angels—Isa (Elodie Bouchez), a free spirit moseying around northern France with a rucksack, meets Marie (Natacha Régnier) in a clothing factory, and Marie offers her a place to stay. In a sense, Erick Zonca's first feature is little more than the brief history of their friendship; what fires it up, and takes it to the brink of greatness, is not only that the director registers every tremor of his heroines' competing emotions—the smiling blitheness of Isa, the inward fury of the beautiful Marie—but that the story travels so far. The film begins with a scuffed, documentary air that gradually deepens, almost without your noticing, into serene moments of epiphany. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (4/5/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)

Election—Tracy Flick (Reese Witherspoon), of George Washington Carver High, in Omaha, Nebraska, busts her chops to become the president of the student body. Tracy gathers signatures, bakes cupcakes, uses everyone; she's a cross between Pat and Richard Nixon. Her fair-minded teacher, Mr. McAllister (Matthew Broderick), develops a surprising obsession with Tracy—something about her bland dynamism aggravates his boredom with his own life, and he tries to stop Tracy cold. This remarkable satirical comedy, written by Jim Taylor and directed with deadpan cool by Alexander Payne (the team responsible for the overlooked "Citizen Ruth"), uses the school election as a prism for an analysis of success and failure in American life. There are many surprises and comic turns, some of them rather bitter, and the ending, in its casual way, is stunning. From a novel by Tom Perrotta.—*D.D.* (4/26 & 5/3/99) (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

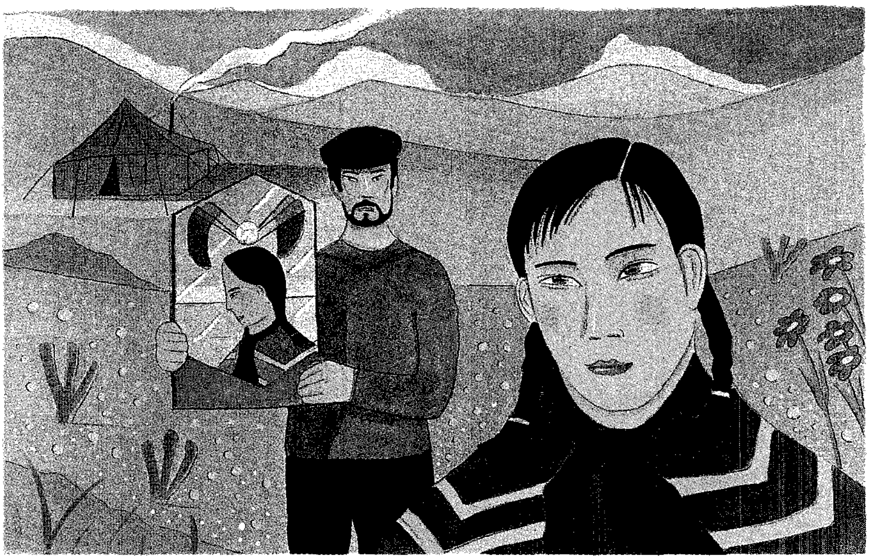
eXistenZ—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

Go—A crowded new movie from Doug Liman, who made the indie hit "Swingers." This time he has chosen to tell three overlapping stories, all of them starting from the same point: Christmas Eve on the seedy side of Los Angeles. First, a checkout clerk (Sarah Polley) attempts to turn drug dealer, with limited success; second, an English friend of hers (Desmond Askew) pays an incendiary visit to Las Vegas (a favored Liman destination); third, a couple of soap actors are forced to lend their services to a narcotics sting. Nothing works out as expected for any of these people: some of them get badly knocked about; others merely endure sticky misunderstandings. Liman's structure feels complicated rather than fruitfully complex, and the picture works best as a scattering of light comic observations. The cast is certainly up for it, although you miss the one-on-one rapport that Liman built up between his hapless heroes in "Swingers"; if anything, this broader project ends up as the victim of its own ambition.—*A.L.* (4/19/99) (Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Lady Vanishes (1938)—Alfred Hitchcock's murder mystery about a fussy, jolly old lady who boards a train and disappears on it is directed with such skill and velocity that it has come to represent the quintessence of screen suspense. It provides some of the finest examples of Hitchcock touches—little shocks and perversities of editing and detail. The hero is played by a tall, callow young man making his first major film appearance—Michael Redgrave; the heroine is Margaret Lockwood, and the lady is Dame May Whitty.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; May 8 and May 10.)

A Letter to Three Wives (1949)—Joseph L. Mankiewicz's satirical comedy on American social and marital conventions. The letter is from the town seductress informing three wives that she has taken away one of their husbands: as each threatened wife reviews her marriage, we get, at best, a sharp, frequently hilarious look at suburbia, and, at worst, a slick series of bright remarks. Jeanne Crain, Linda Darnell, Paul Douglas, Ann Sothern, Kirk Douglas, and Thelma Ritter are all first-rate.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; May 9.)

The Matrix—It has some of the pop-intellectual momentousness of the first "Terminator," but without the wrenching emotions of that movie. We are all living, it turns out, in "the matrix"—a seeming reality controlled by artificial intelligence and policed by vicious men in black. The few people who are free hole up in a space capsule somewhere above the earth, and Keanu Reeves, who is first seen strapped down, with needles and other paraphernalia stuck into him and a disgusting little creature inserted through his belly button (unfortunately for him, he's got an inny), eventually joins the free and becomes a liberator. He fights the bad guys by flying through the air and engaging them in a rhythmic version of kung fu that has the clickety-clack excitement of tap dancing. The movie is nonsense, but it does achieve a brazenly chic high style—black-on-black, airborne, spasmodic. With Laurence Fishburne, who intones his lines rather than speaking them, as the leader of the free men and women. Written and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski.—*D.D.* (4/26 & 5/3/99) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)



Opening May 7, Joan Chen's "Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl."

GEOFFREY PARKER

May Fools (1990)—Louis Malle's film takes place in May, 1968, when, for a few chaotic weeks, French society seemed on the verge of remaking itself: students were rioting, workers were striking, and the country came to a standstill. The characters in this picture are far removed from that stirring street theatre, but they're affected by it nonetheless. Malle and his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, use the upheaval very deftly: it intrudes on their comedy like distant thunder on a sunny day, but the threatened downpour of Meaning never develops—we get a cooling shower of light ironies instead. Michel Piccoli, as Milou, a genial man in his sixties who presides over a shabby estate and lives the life of a lazy country sensualist, gives one of the best performances of his long career. In French.—*Terrence Rafferty* (Florence Gould Hall; May 11.)

National Velvet (1944)—One of the most likable movies of all time. Under the direction of Clarence Brown, the twelve-year-old Elizabeth Taylor rings true on every line she speaks; she gives what is possibly her most dedicated performance as Velvet Brown, a little English girl who wins a horse in a village lottery and is obsessively determined to enter him in the Grand National. As the jockey who coaches Velvet, Mickey Rooney is very fine in some scenes; in others, he's a shade too professional, too ready with his lines. The film is a high-spirited, childish dream; like "The Wizard of Oz," it makes people smile when they recall it.—*P.K.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 9.)

Never Been Kissed—As a young reporter who goes undercover to do a story on today's teen-agers, Drew Barrymore is cherubic, banging into doors, tripping on stairs, and looking adorably embarrassed by her clumsiness. The film, which Barrymore produced, is meant to be a charming coming-of-age story, but it plays a little too sweetly for its own good.—*Bruce Diones* (Criterion Center, East 85th Street, and Union Square.)

Pushing Tin—At the climax of this comedy-drama about the high-pressure lives of New York's air-traffic controllers, John Cusack, as a hot shot of the radar screen, and Billy Bob Thornton, as a fellow blip-watcher and a challenger to Cusack's status, angrily wrestle on the floor while a hundred or so airplanes converge on Kennedy, LaGuardia, and Newark airports. Who's minding the store? As the movie tells it, these professionals lead such a nerve-racking existence that they spend all their spare time seducing one another's wives or competing in infantile ways. The wives, played by Cate Blanchett and Angelina Jolie, are very much worth fighting for, but the clichéd macho silliness of the picture gets to be infuriating after a while. Let us hope that the filmmakers (director Mike Newell and screenwriters Glen and Les Charles) are getting it wrong. There must be a better way to make a movie about landing a plane.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

Roberta (1935)—Ginger Rogers sparks this Astaire-Rogers musical with her all-American chutzpah—her big eyes glow with ebullience, confidence, and sexual rascality. She plays an Indiana song-and-dance girl posing in Paris as a wealthy Polish countess; Astaire plays the resourceful leader of a band called the Wabash Indianians, brought over to France because a club owner thinks they're Indians. Astaire and Rogers's nonpareil jauntiness provides an irresistible counterpoint to the stop-and-go romance between a Russian princess working as a dress designer (Irene Dunne) and a good-looking American jock (Randolph Scott). Dunne gets to sing "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," but Rogers's breakneck flirting and dancing in "I'll Be Hard to Handle" is what revs things up. Music by Jerome Kern.—*Michael Sragow* (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 9.)

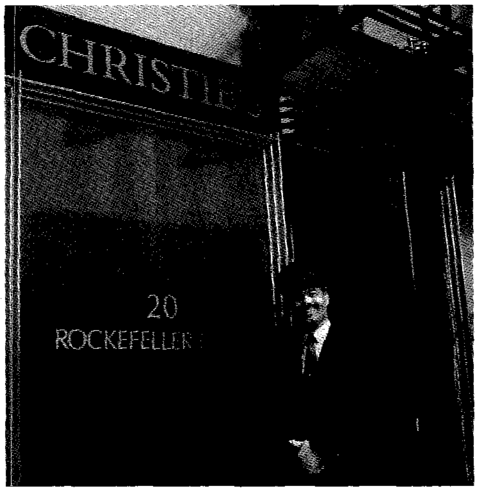
Sabotage (1936; also known as "The Woman Alone")—Hitchcock thought that he erred in this one, and that that explained why the picture wasn't a hit. But he was wrong: this adaptation of Conrad's "The Secret Agent" may be just about the best of his English thrillers, and if the public didn't respond it wasn't his fault. Sylvia Sidney and Oscar Homolka are a married pair, the Verlocs, who manage a small movie house; Desmond Tester plays Mrs. Verloc's younger brother, who, unknowingly, carries a bomb in the package her husband has given him to deliver. There's a breathtaking sequence when Mrs. Verloc, who has just learned of her brother's death, watches the cartoon "Who Killed Cock Robin?"—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; May 7 and May 9.)

SLC Punk!—A messy but engaging look at the punk scene in Salt Lake City during the Reagan years; that may sound a little specialized, but how many of us knew there ever *was* a punk scene—or even a single punk—in the home of the Mormons? The star is Matthew Lillard, who is fast outgrowing his "Scream" persona; here, the frustrated wrath of his teen-age character, Stevo, is finely offset by Lillard's gangling sweetness. The whole movie, indeed, is a wry look back at rebellion; how can you hope to change the world, the movie asks, when it's far too much trouble to change

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



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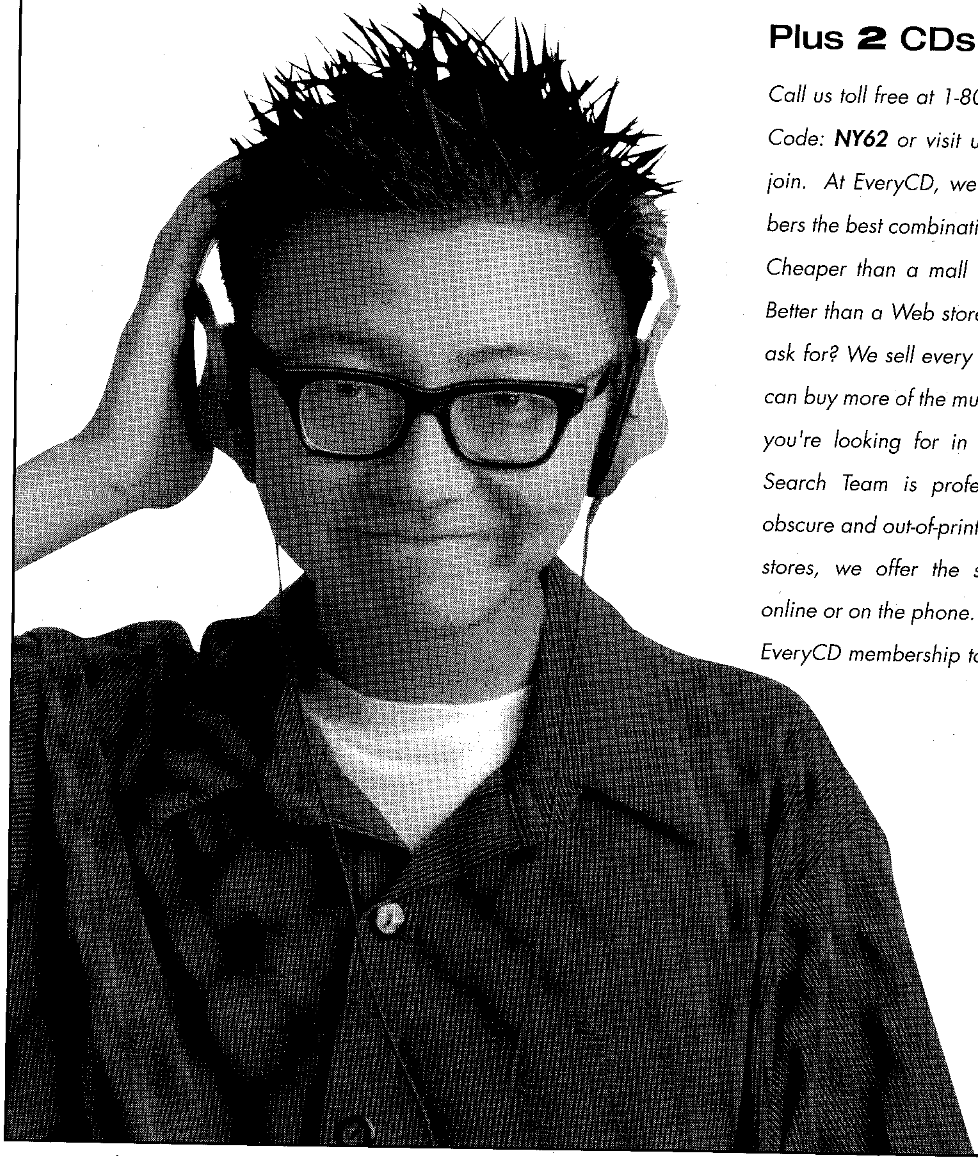

your hairstyle, let alone your girlfriend? Director James Merendino likes to play up his busy visual habits, as if to cover the slow patches in the plot, and he can't quite rid himself of a weakness for voiceover; yet his film grows unexpectedly touching, as Stevo's friendship with the clueless Bob (Michael Goorjian)—like the panicky era in which they have thrived—comes to a cold and tranquil end.—*A.L.* (4/19/99) (Art Greenwich Twin.)

10 Things I Hate About You—Bianca (Larisa Oleynik) is an appealing Padua High sophomore, but her worrywart father (Larry Miller) won't let her date until her smart and difficult older sister, Kat (Julia Stiles), softens up and agrees to go out with somebody. As long as the writers Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith keep the "Taming of the Shrew" parallels going, "10 Things" bobs along brightly. First-time feature director Gil Junger gets a lot of laughs in the long setup, but the story eventually reverts to an almost typical high-school romance. Not quite "Clueless."—*Ken Marks* (84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

At MOMA, films featuring Ann Sothern.

CORNEL RUBINO

The Third Man (1949)—A masterpiece, now fifty years old, that is somehow both irresistibly enjoyable and cruelly knowledgeable about the way the grown-up world actually works. In post-war Vienna, a ruined city patrolled by silent international military police, Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), a naïve American writer of pulp Westerns, shows up looking for his businessman friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles). Informed that Lime is dead, Martins encounters Harry's sinister Viennese acquaintances and falls in love with Harry's girl, an expatriate Czech actress (Alida Valli), who seems indifferent to the signs that Harry and his friends were mixed up in a dirty racket. Produced by Alexander Korda, written by Graham Greene, and directed by Carol Reed, the movie turns Vienna into a monstrous Expressionist stage set; the enormous shadows grow larger as people recede into the darkness. The moods are hauntingly ambiguous and sardonic, with shades of disillusionment which make the American noir movies of the same period seem hysterical or childish. Cinematography by Robert Krasker; insinuating zither music by Anton Karas. This version (the original British one) is eleven minutes longer than the American version, which was edited by David O. Selznick. Everything plays in a more leisurely and detailed way.—*D.D.* (Film Forum; starting May 7.)

Three Seasons—The début film of the Vietnamese-American director Tony Bui, in which the lives of several people in Ho Chi Minh City—a cyclo driver and the prostitute he's obsessed with, a middle-aged G.I. looking for his Vietnamese daughter, a young woman who writes down the verse of a leprous poet, and a little street kid who has lost his merchandise—are woven into a composite picture of life after the war. The movie substitutes sensitivity for drama; it's a little too high-minded. But the cinematography (by Lisa Rinzler) is lustrously beautiful, and the editing is very fine. Bui, only twenty-six, is a superb craftsman, and the movie's lulling tone and tempo are easy to take. With Harvey Keitel as the American; the accomplished Vietnamese actors include Don Duong, Zoë Bui, and Nguyen Ngoc Hiep. In Vietnamese.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Walk on the Moon—In a clannish Catskills bungalow colony, in the summer of 1969—Woodstock summer—Pearl (Diane Lane), a bored young Jewish housewife and mother, becomes convinced that she's lost a decade to mah-jongg and Waldbaum's and begins an affair with a handsome Gentile stranger (Viggo Mortensen) who's passing through. Her hardworking husband (Liev Schreiber), who was never told that sensuality should be part of a man's equipment, is appalled and fights back. In form, the movie is perhaps no more than a conventional triangle drama, but the milieu lends the material a special charm and interest. The actor Tony Goldwyn, directing his first movie, and working from a fine screenplay by Pamela Gray, beautifully captures a moment in which the straitened moral world of the lower-middle-class Jewish characters is beginning to open up—with necessarily painful results.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (Art Greenwich Twin, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

EDtv (reviewed in our issue of 3/29/99): First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6. . . . **Entrapment:** Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **Get Real:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square. . . . **Hideous Kinky:** Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **Idle Hands:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, Union Square, and Waverly. . . . **The King of Masks:** Cinema Village, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **Life:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Union Square. . . . **Life Is Beautiful** (11/16/98 and 3/15/99): Angelika Film Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Guild, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **Lost & Found:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **Lovers of the Arctic Circle:** BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **Shakespeare in Love** (12/21/98): Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **Testamento:** Quad Cinema. . . . **The Winslow Boy:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films directed by or about François Truffaut; in French, with English subtitles. May 5-6 and May 11: "Stolen Portraits" (1993, Serge Toubiana and Michel Pascal), a film about Truffaut. . . . From May 11: "Jules and Jim" (1961).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films directed by Alfred Hitchcock. May 6 at 2:30: "The 39 Steps" (1935). . . . May 6 at 6 and May 8 at 1: "Secret Agent" (1936). . . . May 7 at 2:30: "Waltzes from Vienna" (1933). . . . May 7 at 6 and May 9 at 5: "Sabotage" (†). . . . May 7 at 8 and May 9 at 2: "Young and Innocent" (1937). . . . May 8 at 3 and May 10 at 6: "The Lady Vanishes" (†). . . . May 8 at 5:45 and May 10 at 2:30: "Jamaica Inn" (1939). . . . May 11 at 2:30: "Rebecca" (1940). . . . May 11 at 6: "Foreign Correspondent" (1940). . . . ¶ A program of films featuring Ann Sothern. May 7 at 6: "The Sharpest Girl in Town" (1999, Mike Kaplan), a documentary about Sothern; and "Maisie Was a Lady" (1941, Edward L. Marin). . . . May 7 at 8: "Lady Be Good" (1941, Norman Z. McLeod). . . . May 8 at 1: "Folies Bergère" (1935, Roy del Ruth). . . . May 8 at 3: "Shadow on the Wall" (1950, Patrick Jackson). . . . May 8 at 5 and May 10 at 6: "Let's Fall in Love" (1934, David Burton) and "Hooray for Love" (1935, Walter Lang). . . . May 9 at 1: "Maisie Gets Her Man" (1942, del Ruth). . . . May 9 at 3: "Lady in a Cage" (1964, Walter Graumann). . . . May 9 at 5: "A Letter to Three Wives" (†). . . . May 10 at 3: "The Killing Kind" (1973, Curtis Harrington).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—"Bunco: The Art of the Con," a series of films focussing on the con game. May 5 at 2 and 6:15 and May 6 at 4:10: "House of Games" (1987, David Mamet). . . . May 5 at 4 and 8:20 and May 6 at 2: "The Spanish Prisoner" (1998, Mamet). . . . May 7 at 2 and 6:30 and May 8 at 4 and 8:30: "Paper Moon" (1973, Peter Bogdanovich). . . . May 7 at 4 and 8:30 and May 8 at 6: "The Sting" (1973, George Roy Hill). . . . May 9 at 7 and May 10 at 2 and 6:15: "Gaslight" (1944, George Cukor). . . . May 9 at 9:15 and May 10 at 4:15 and 8:30: "Whirlpool" (1949, Otto Preminger). . . . ¶ May 6 at 6:30: "Afraid of Everything" (1999, David Barker). . . . ¶ May 9 at 11:30, 2, and 4:30: the Charlie Chaplin short films "The Idle Class" (1921) and "Pay Day" (1922), along with a live performance by Bill Irwin.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—May 9 at 1: "National Velvet" (†). . . . ¶ A program of Fred Astaire films. May 8 at 2: "The Gay Divorcée" (1934, Mark Sandrich). . . . May 8 at 4:30: "Top Hat" (1935, Sandrich). . . . May 9 at 4: "Swing Time" (1936, George Stevens). . . . May 9 at 6: "Roberta" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 11 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "May Fools" (†).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films featuring Marcello Mastroianni. May 11 at 7: "A Very Private Affair" (1962, Louis Malle; in French). . . . May 11 at 9: "Ginger and Fred" (1986, Federico Fellini; in Italian).

Classically Independent Film Festival—May 7-10: A program of films, such as "Choose Me" (1984, Alan Rudolph), "One False Move" (1991, Carl Franklin), and "The Unbelievable Truth" (1990, Hal Hartley). (Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. 727-8110)

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A program of Alfred Hitchcock's television work, featuring "Wet Saturday" (1956), "The Horseplayer" (1961), and "I Saw the Whole Thing" (1962). Thursday and Friday at 6 and Saturday and Sunday at 2.

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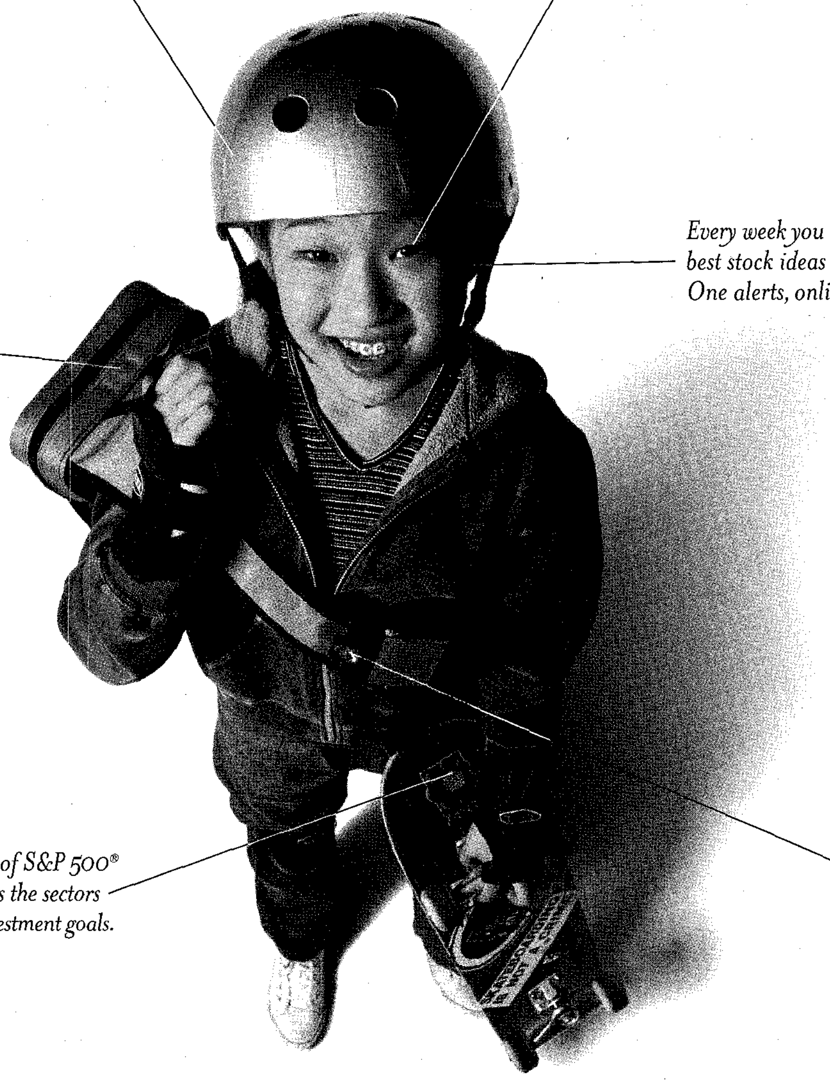

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Bad boys.

Ninety years ago, in France, the *Journal de Rouen* carried an article recounting the "strange details" behind the case of "young Nény, barely fifteen years old, who, in the middle of a class at the Lycée Blaise-Pascal at Clermont-Ferrand, blew out his brains with a revolver." Considering that Nény had been brought up in a family "where there took place scenes of such violence that often—in fact, on the very eve of his death—he was obliged to go to stay with neighbors," and that he was given to "assiduous and uncontrolled reading of pessimistic German philosophers," the article deemed the child's attraction to suicide "regrettable, but understandable." The correspondent reserved his outrage and bewilderment for the "monstrous" discovery that Nény had belonged to a clique of morbidly alienated classmates—"an evil society of youngsters for forcing one another to suicide." On the day before the incident, Nény and his "accomplices" visited the chosen classroom and marked a chalk "X" on the floor where he would stand and die. "A pupil who entered at this moment saw the rehearsal: he was flung out the door with the threat, 'You know too much—we'll have to take care of you,' " the *Journal* reported, adding, "There was, it seems, a list of those who were to be taken care of."

The novelist André Gide happened to read this item, and it became fixed in his imagination. Sixteen years later, an almost identical scene of a classroom suicide appeared as the climax of his masterpiece "The Counterfeiters." The victim, in Gide's telling, is named Boris, a boy who "dreaded being laughed at," and "would have dared anything, however dangerous, however foolhardy, for the sake of a little consideration." He is a perfect mark for his classmates' secret society, the Brotherhood of Strong Men, whose motto is "The strong man cares nothing for life." Today, with our newspapers still working over the latest story of suicidal schoolboys—Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who killed twelve of their classmates and a teacher before taking their own lives, at Columbine High School, in Littleton, Colorado—we may like to fancy that children were more innocent in earlier times. Yet one need only look to the diary Gide kept as he wrote "The Counterfeiters," in which he noted that a young acquaintance defined a friend as "somebody with whom you'd be happy to do a bad deed," to be reminded that some children have always been as pure in their amorality as others are pure in virtue, and that their capacity for doing harm is never as great as when they are in league with their bosom companions.

The attack carried out by Harris and Klebold—members of the so-called Trench Coat Mafia, who were taunted by jocks and were hungry for revenge, and who dreamed, we now know, of ending as many lives as possible along with their own—is plainly a crime of a different order from the suicide of a single child, tricked to his death by false friends. (And the Colorado case, as we are constantly reminded, was only "one of the worst" of recent school massacres.) Yet the freshness and the shock of Gide's novel stand undiminished, not only because of the book's eerie topicality but, more strikingly, by virtue of its grand formal design. By setting Boris's suicide at the very end of his story, and refusing to subject it to retrospective analysis, Gide denies us the conventional satisfaction of a who-done-it-and-why narrative that begins with a crime and sets the ruptured world right again by explaining the wound. Just as we are now told that nobody in Littleton saw Harris and Klebold's rampage coming, so Gide's alter ego in the book, a writer who is himself at work on a novel called "The Counterfeiters," takes the story's sudden lurch into violence as a reproach, remarking, "It displeases me to be surprised. Boris's suicide seems to me an *indecency*, for I was not expecting it."

The Brotherhood of Strong Men and the Trench Coat Mafia: differences

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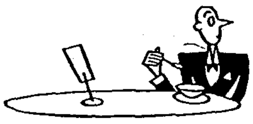
of time and place make the parallels between these two groups of estranged kids inexact but no less distressing. Much has been said in the aftermath of the Littleton carnage about the anthropology of American high-school life, and the vicious factionalism that sets even the most privileged middle-class kids into rival gangs of jocks, nerds, goths, or what-have-yous. But, however hurt Harris and Klebold may have been by the rejection of some of their classmates, and regardless of their fascination with Nazi arcana, it would be folly to interpret their crimes as the expression of a new era of teen-age identity politics. Unlike the Unabomber or the destroyers of the Oklahoma City federal building, they did not act in the service of any larger idea, or in the name of any broader social or political movement. They went berserk, and although their suicide-attack was savagely premeditated, it was also dumbfoundingly meaningless: a perfect waste.

The *Journal* account of Nény's suicide ended with a cautionary detail. "When he fell, one of the conspirators had the horrible presence of mind to leap for the revolver and spirit it away," the newspaper reported. "It has not yet been recovered. What will be done with it next?" Such worry about the whereabouts of a single handgun may seem almost quaint in this American moment, yet it is obviously the essential issue we confront after Littleton. As Gide noted, "A little cowardice enters into every suicide," and a great share of the cowardice that we saw in Littleton must be attributed to our politicians, who are content to preside over a country where an absurd arsenal of spectacular firearms is almost as easily accessible to any man, woman, or child as a carton of milk. —PHILIP GOUREVITCH

TABLE TALK

The Dow breaks ten thousand, and soup follows suit.

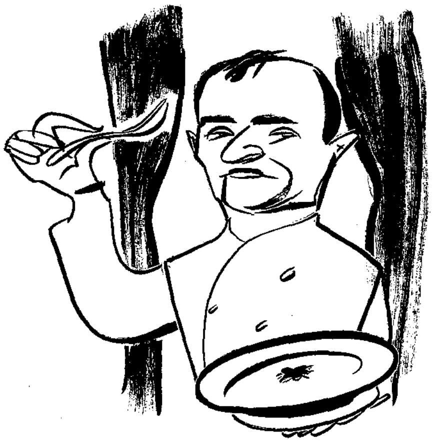
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



It is not immediately apparent that Christian Delouvrier, the soft-spoken fifty-two-year-old French chef who runs the four-star kitchen at Lespinasse, is a Soup Nazi. But, after the mere dozen or so spoonfuls it takes to lap up his highly touted thirty-five-dollar-a-bowl Leek and Potato Soup with Sautéed Langoustines and Black Truffle, one wonders whether the chef might not bear some resemblance to his fellow-denizen of Fifty-fifth Street in testing the limits of his customers' patience. True, it's not unusual to find entrées that cost more than forty dollars at top New York restaurants anymore; but thirty-five-dollar soup?

The diminutive Delouvrier, who hides a sly smile behind an unassuming front, defends his soup, which features the rarer white truffles, in season. He even calls it a bargain. "I pay sixteen hundred dollars a pound for my Italian white truffles," Delouvrier said the other day in the restaurant's dining room. "You can pay less, of course, but then they would not be as good. Without the truffles," Delouvrier observed, "the soup would probably cost maybe ten or twelve dollars."

The soup's price seemed fine to Ruth Reichl, the recently departed *Times* restaurant critic, who raved over Lespinasse in a four-star review last December. "If you have ever longed to put on a powdered wig and pretend to be a Sun King, Lespinasse is for you," Reichl wrote. Sun Kings, however, like restaurant critics, probably have unlimited expense accounts. (Not to mention wigs.)



Christian Delouvrier

For those who come to Lespinasse without a Sun King in their party, here is a breakdown of the ingredients in Delouvrier's concoction. The truffles come in thin slices, four to an order. The leeks hail from Holland, at $2.88 a pound. The potatoes come from Idaho. "Good and cheap," Delouvrier said. He gets his langoustines fresh from wherever they're best at the moment; right now that's Texas and South America, for twelve to fifteen dollars a pound. "When you add it all up, it's probably a break-even cost," he said. "Maybe we're even losing a little money, depending on truffle costs." He hastened to add that, as part of Lespinasse's forty-six-dollar prix-fixe lunch, he offers a modified version of the soup, which he describes as a "real deal." However, it comes with only a single slice of truffle. —DAVID BLUM

GETTING IT RIGHT DEPT.

The historian who helped keep "The Civil War" honest.

In Act II of Frank Wildhorn's new musical, "The Civil War," which opened recently at the St. James Theatre, a Union soldier sings, "When this war is over and we all have passed away / There'll be some damn fool in some damn school who'll write about today." Eric Foner, the show's historical consultant, was in the audience the other night. "I guess that's me," he said when he heard the soldier's line. "At least I don't have to deal with people popping up in the audience saying, 'I was there, and you got it wrong.' "

Foner's element is not the Broadway of Times Square but the Broadway seventy blocks north, at Columbia University, where he is the DeWitt Clinton Professor of History. When he got a call from Wildhorn's people last year requesting his expertise, it wasn't the composer's credentials ("The Scarlet Pimpernel," "Jekyll & Hyde") that persuaded him to accept but the encouragement of his two hundred students. "I asked them 'Is this beneath me?' and they said, 'No, no, no! You've got to do it!' "

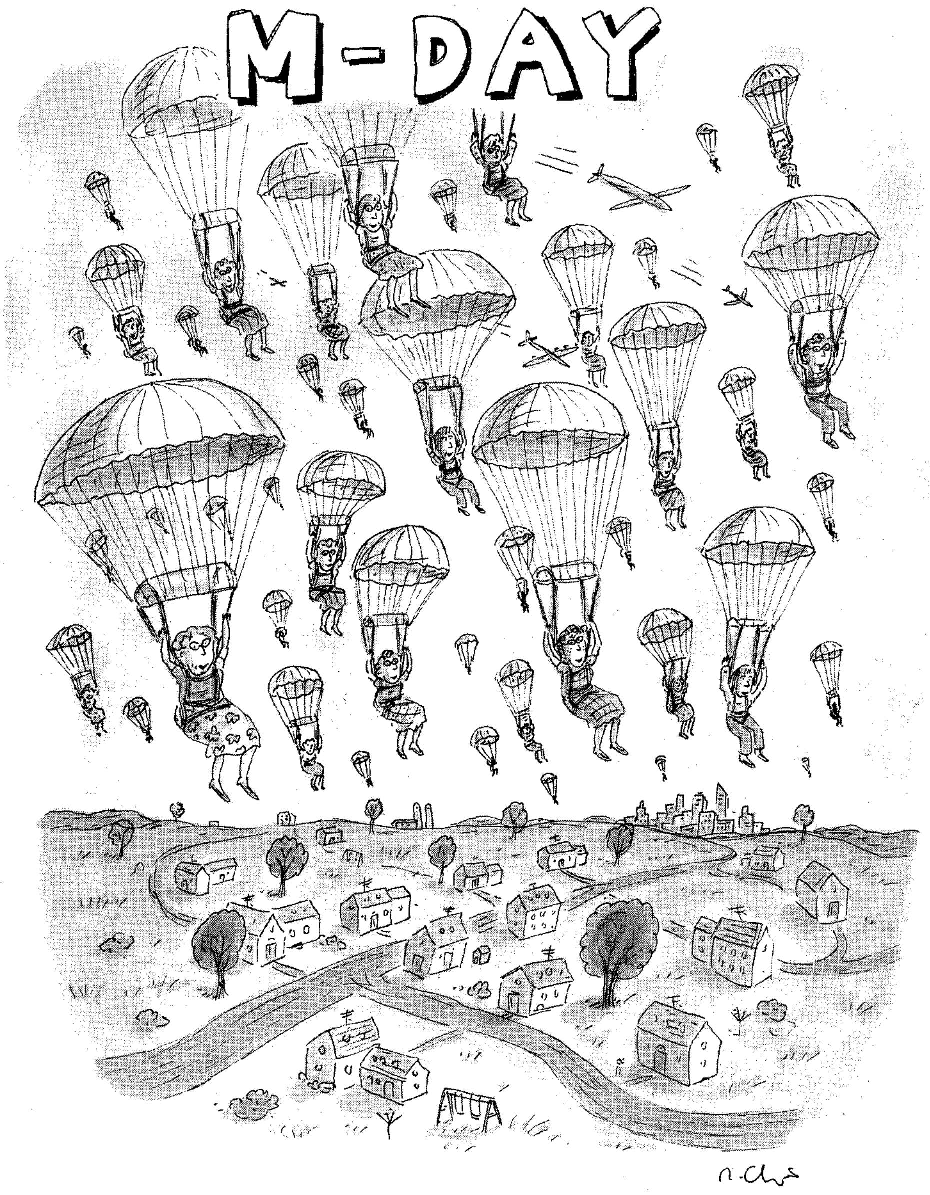
The students might not have been so enthusiastic if they had known that the reviews would turn out to be as devastating as Sherman's march. But Foner, a tall, wry man, is satisfied that he has held up his end. "No one has questioned my role in it, anyway," he said. "Most of what I did is invisible—eliminating inaccuracies." At a preview, Foner pounced on a scene that depicted a black Union soldier fighting at the Battle of Gettysburg. "The fact is," Foner said, "there were no black soldiers there." The scene was rewritten. More problematic was the song "Five Boys," inspired by President Lincoln's famous condolence letter to Mrs. Bixby, who lost five sons in battle. Foner pointed out that not only was Lincoln's body count wrong (there were actually only two sons) but Lincoln wrote the letter in 1864, well after it appears in the musical's chronology. The song stayed put. Foner shrugged: "You win some, you lose some."

Foner has been serving as a historical expert-for-hire for more than twenty years. His most recent gig has been an unusually happy one, because, he says, his advice was largely heeded. By contrast, the documentarian Ken Burns ignored his recommendation to include more about Reconstruction in his "Civil War" series. ("Burns is a very fine filmmaker," Foner said, "and one reason is that he's got strong views that he doesn't deviate from. To be a consultant to Ken Burns is kind of an oxymoron.") The filmmakers behind "Glory," who invited Foner to an early screening, rejected the favorable blurb he supplied for the movie because he refused to include the magic words "historically accurate."

"Hollywood wants the imprimatur of history but not the responsibility," Foner said. He once asked a TV producer why hybrid entities like docudramas were so often presented as "true stories." The reply: " 'Professor'—the entertainment world is the only place where they always call you 'professor'—'if you can say it's true, you get five extra rating points.' In other words, authenticity sells more soap."

In 1992, while he was a visiting professor at U.C.L.A., Foner went to Disneyland with his four-year-old daughter and was bothered by the "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" exhibit: the talking animatronic figure of Lincoln, programmed with remarks made by the sixteenth President, did not once mention slavery. When Foner wrote a letter of protest ("It's the job of the historian to be a killjoy"), he was invited to provide a different speech by the Great Emancipator, and to rewrite the voice-over tape loop that plays at the Hall of Presidents at Walt Disney World, in Orlando. "They had this bland, celebratory introduction based on the idea that America began perfect and has been getting better ever since," he recalled. "So I rewrote it to say that the Declaration of Independence set out some basic ideals that we still haven't quite lived up to—that this experiment in democracy is an ongoing thing. A fourth-grade idea, but rather subversive from a Disney point of view."

When Foner was working on the Disney project, it was rumored in academic circles that he was being paid a quarter of a million dollars. According to the professor, the actual figure was a few thousand. "Very modest, even by academic standards," he said. "For Disney, that's a meal." —THOMAS VINCIGUERRA



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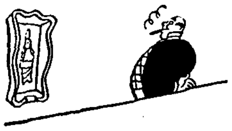
ENDANGERED SPECIES DEPT.

A cowboy is gone from the highway, but he rides on in the art world.



THE obituaries for the Marlboro Man made many front pages in the last couple of weeks. The cowboy was a casualty of the two-hundred-and-six-billion-dollar tobacco settlement, which bans large billboard advertising. But, while Marlboro's white-hatted, duster-wearing cowboys will no longer loom over our nation's highways, they will still hang on museum walls, thanks to the photographs of Richard Prince, the artist who, in the nineteen-eighties, became famous for his pictures of Marlboro magazine ads. (The Marlboro Man will continue in the magazine ads themselves.) Just as Sherrie Levine photographed the work of Walker Evans, Prince photographed the work of the Leo Burnett Agency. "I'll personally miss them," Prince said of the giant Marlboro ads. "Every time I see one I like, it looks like one of mine, and that makes me feel good."

Prince got the idea for the cowboy pictures in the seventies, when he was working at Time-Life, ripping up magazines in order to assemble tear sheets for the company's writers. Each week, he'd be left with just the ad pages, and each week those pages would include ads for Marlboro. The ads suited Prince's artistic purposes, because they tended to be full-page and had very little copy. In 1980, Prince, who had already completed a project rephotographing ads for Seaman's living-room ensembles from the *Times Magazine*, started snapping photos of the cigarette cowboys. In a strange way, it was as if he were putting together a documentary of the consumer life.

"I wanted to take another picture and produce a real photograph of it," Prince says. "These pictures were part of my landscape, even though the landscape was in a magazine. I wasn't outside, looking at the street. I was inside, looking at a magazine all day. It seemed to be a natural thing to consider."

Prince says he didn't pick the Marlboro Men because he liked cowboys. He picked them because there were so many to choose from and because he liked the way they looked in his camera. "There's something about a rider on a horse—it's like a car, it fits the golden rectangle," he says. "That's a very classical, Greek ideal, and that's always very attractive." On the other hand, even Prince couldn't fully escape the lure of the open range. "I don't feel like a cowboy, and I don't feel I could be a cowboy, but it's like when a child plays at cowboys and Indians, there's a desire there. At the end of the day, though, I certainly don't sit down in my leather chaps. But I don't know. Maybe somehow I wish I could."

Richard Prince

Formally elegant, iconographically resonant, the Marlboro ads seem to give us everything we could want from a billboard or a page in a magazine. But Prince points to something more. "There is no sky that looks like that in real life," he says. "What's in those pictures could exist only in those pictures."

And yet it's far from clear that Philip Morris needs the Marlboro Man billboards in order to prosper. The company, after all, has been more than willing to cast the highway cowboys aside in exchange for an end to the threat of litigation. And Prince, for one, has no doubts on this score. "People smoked before those ads, and they'll continue to smoke after they're gone. I don't think they sold a single cigarette," he says. "Hell, when I smoked, I smoked Camels." —JAMES SUROWIECKI

DEPT. OF TIMING

It's never a good moment to ask Americans to turn off the TV.

BY all rights, Wednesday, April 21st, should have been the high point of Henry Labalme's five-year crusade to persuade Americans to spend less time watching television and more time reading books, riding bikes, and talking to each other. After years of gathering data and building a solid grassroots organization, he had finally attached his cause to a real bully pulpit. At noon on that day, Surgeon General David Satcher publicly endorsed Labalme's fifth annual National TV-Turnoff Week, unveiling a special poster to be draped in front of television screens across the country for the next seven days.

But the previous day two teen-agers in Littleton, Colorado, had opened fire on their high school, and TV-Turnoff Week ended up being one of the biggest TV-watching weeks of the year. ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and MSNBC all reported huge ratings boosts from their coverage of the shootings. "NBC Nightly News" racked up "double-digit viewer growth in both total viewers and homes," according to an NBC spokesperson. " 'News with Brian Williams' rocketed 105%," crowed an MSNBC press release, which also pointed out that the network had "shattered its previous peak quarter-hour record . . . during John Gibson's interview with a Columbine High School student." CNN reported its best day of the year, with ratings up four hundred and twenty-five per cent, and CBS's "48 Hours" scored its best ratings in nearly two years.

Labalme, an avid kayaker who hasn't had a television set in his home for nearly twenty years, isn't amused by the irony. "Here you have the nation's top public health official recommending that people turn off the TV for health reasons, and then something happens that may have been caused by TV in the first place," he said from his headquarters in Washington, D.C., the other day. "And yet it compels people to watch TV even more!"

This is not the first time that the anticipated serenity of TV-Turnoff Week has been destroyed by mayhem. Just days before the inaugural TV-Turnoff Week, in April, 1995, Timothy McVeigh blew up the Murrah federal building, in Oklahoma City. "I was doing a radio interview at the time," Labalme recalls, "and they had to cut it short because of a report coming in about a major explosion." The anti-TV forces didn't stand much of a chance. "People love to watch that stuff," Labalme said. "That is what television excels at—broadcasting dramatic and gory details of personal tragedy, and then rebroadcasting them again and again."

His own streak of bad luck aside, Labalme's real concern is that the exhaustive coverage of the Colorado shootings may provide the seed for next month's crisis. "Certainly one can make the argument that the attention given to both the perpetrators and the victims sets up the conditions for the next tragedy," he said. That's what seems to have happened last year, he pointed out, when a school shooting in Jonesboro, Arkansas, came three months after a school shooting in Stamps, Arkansas, which came only two weeks after a school shooting in Paducah, Kentucky, which had followed one in Pearl, Mississippi, by a couple of months—all of them extensively covered by TV news.

Last year, TV-Turnoff Week was unhappily sandwiched between the Jonesboro shooting and mania over the final episode of "Seinfeld." But Labalme's five years of Turnoffs have not been a total loss. There was one blessedly distraction-free year. "In Turnoff '96, we were fighting against the election," he said. "But in '97 there was nothing going on all month long—nothing. The election was over. It was pre-Monica and post-O.J. We were the only game in town." —DAVID SHENK

THE BOARDS

A quick life of a Broadway great.

CY COLEMAN, the energetic, versatile, from-the-Bronx-and-proud-of-it show-biz composer, had dinner the other night at his club (The Friars, naturally) before heading over to a rehearsal of his new show, "Exactly Like You." This one is Off Broadway—at the tiny York Theatre, in St. Peter's Church at the Citicorp Center.

Coleman, who has an open, unlifted face, was in friendly, raspy-voiced form, wearing a sports coat over a sports shirt, no tie, and rumpled pants. Seated at a corner table, he was fussed over by the club's tummler-taught waiters. He sat under framed portraits of fellow-Friars, dead and alive (Rodgers, Hammerstein, Porter, Berlin, Gershwin, Sinatra, Burns, Benny, Sammy Davis, Jr., Lucille Ball, Henny Youngman).

Coleman explained himself:

"How could I help it? When I was four, one of my mother's boarders couldn't pay the rent and skipped, leaving behind his piano. So I started playing it, picking out tunes by ear that I heard on the radio. Then I couldn't stay away from it. My mother got me lessons with Constance Tallarico, who was the grandmother of Aerosmith's Steve Tyler, father of Liv. Later, I went to the High School of Music and Art, and to the New York College of Music, where I studied composition and counterpoint.

"I had to earn some money, so I got dates in various clubs, and then my first steady job, playing cocktail piano at the Monte Carlo restaurant. Popsie Whitaker, the night-club columnist in *The New Yorker*, got me started by writing a strong review of my playing at the little night club Le Perroquet. Then Serge Obolensky hired me to play at his hotel, the Sherry Netherland. He gave me a closet-size room to dress and rest in. I liked it, so I lived in it.

"Coming to hear me play became a society thing to do. One night, Obolensky introduced me to the old Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, and we had our picture taken together. The *World-Telegram* printed it under the headline 'THE QUEEN OF THE SOCIAL SCENE AND THE PRINCE OF THE PIANO.' Then Mrs. Vanderbilt invited me to a party at her mansion, at Fifth Avenue and Eighty-sixth Street. A lot of dressed-up people were at the party, but nobody talked to me. Mrs. Vanderbilt didn't even recognize me. She said to me, 'And what do *you* do?'

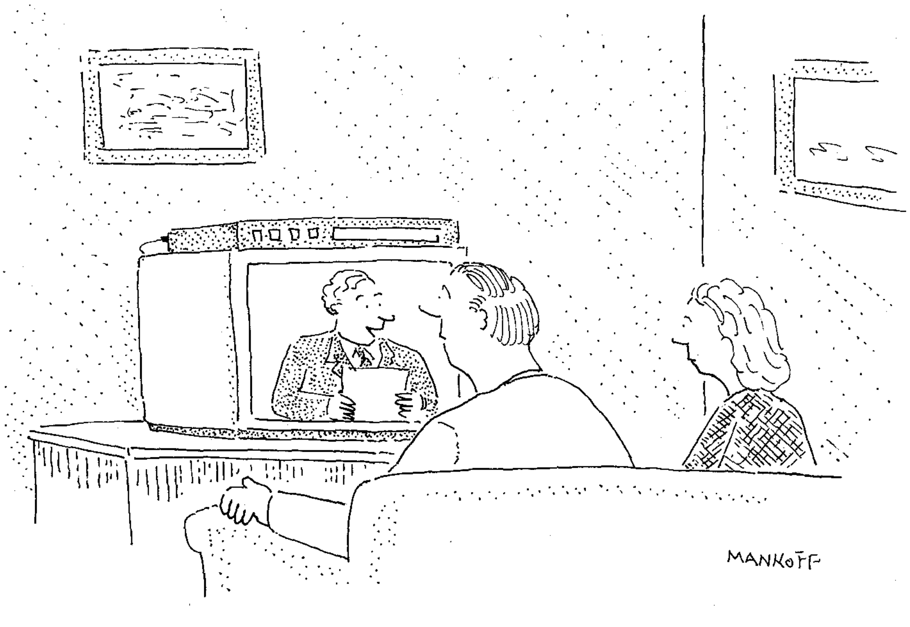
"I was having a good time at the Sherry Netherland, but I was a rambunctious kid. I would argue with Obolensky. I didn't want to play at cocktail parties for society matrons anymore. And I didn't like it when they said 'You're playing too loud!' and I'd have to say 'You're talking too loud.' So I went on to other jobs—at the Blue Angel, at the Embers, at Bop City, at the Little Club.

"In 1950, I went on television and became a regular on a variety show. Then I started writing songs and recording other people's songs. My first record, a single for Decca with orchestra and chorus, had 'It Ain't Necessarily So' on A side and 'Lullaby of the Leaves' on B side. It was the beginning of my making records with singers—eventually, great singers, like Mabel Mercer and Bricktop and Blossom Dearie and Sylvia Syms and Bobby Short and Peggy Lee. I also started appearing out of town, at the Sahara in Las Vegas, at the Eden Roc in Miami Beach. For a while, Billy Taylor and I spelled each other at the Copacabana.

"In 1955, I teamed up with Carolyn Leigh as lyricist, and 'Witchcraft,' our first song, became a big hit, because Sinatra recorded it. Then we collaborated on our first show, 'Wildcat,' with Lucille Ball. In that one, 'Hey, Look Me Over!' became a hit and a standard. With Dorothy Fields as my next collaborator, I did 'Sweet Charity,' with Gwen Verdon, based on Fellini's movie 'Nights of Cabiria.' It was a smash, with the songs 'Big Spender' and 'If My Friends Could See Me Now.'

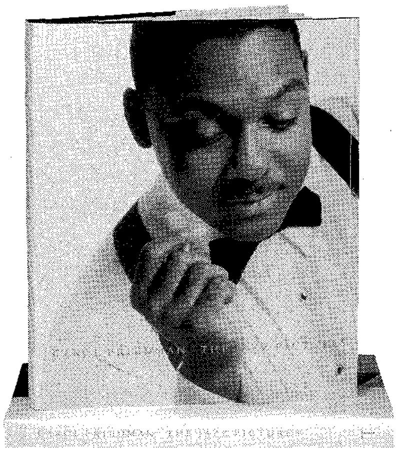
"Since then, I've mostly done original musicals. The music is its own reward, but there are side benefits. There's a 'Sweet Charity' swimming pool at my house in Southampton, a 'Barnum' hot tub, a 'City of Angels' tennis court, and 'Will Rogers Follies' home improvements in my house in the city.

"What I've lost along the way is the fear of doing it. I'm not afraid to speak up. If I don't have the energy and enthusiasm, I'm not going to do it. My new show is small. I love to be able to do something in a confined space. We've got a wonderful, sweet song in 'Exactly Like You,' called 'She Makes Me Laugh.' I've got to get it to Tony Bennett." —LILLIAN ROSS

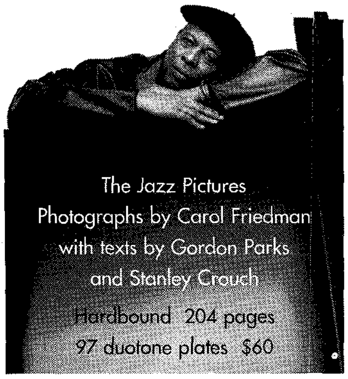


"In a further effort to ingratiate herself with New Yorkers, Hillary Clinton threw out the first pitch at last night's Yankee game and went on to pitch three scoreless innings."

CAROL FRIEDMAN
THE JAZZ PICTURES



"I have seen many photographs of jazz musicians through the years, but Carol Friedman's are beyond category. She has illuminated the very souls of these improvisers on and in the life force."
—Nat Hentoff



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AROUND CITY HALL

STORMIN' NORMAN

The Mayor has given Norman Siegel an unexpected gift—he's made civil liberties a pressing issue.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

It takes a certain asceticism, not to mention an abstracted sense of self, to work for the American Civil Liberties Union and get a kick out of it. The pay is modest, the hours are long, and if things go right the reward may well be the satisfaction that comes from having made it possible for a particularly pathetic band of Nazis to march through a Jewish neighborhood. Almost by definition, the work strains against common decency, or, at least, common sense, and taking it on means committing oneself to the life of a perpetual contrarian: the majority, after all, has more effective ways of defending its interests than a lawyer from the A.C.L.U.

Norman Siegel has headed the organization's New York branch, the N.Y.C.L.U., for the past fourteen years. He is fifty-five, has wiry brown hair and a craggy face, and, as much as anyone, has helped promote the group's post-Skokie image. He has fought, on principle, against police racism and has defended, also on principle, police who are racists; he has championed gay rights and the rights of groups to exclude gays. Around City Hall, the mere mention of his name elicits groans, and in the office of the corporation counsel, among the attorneys who are obliged to defend the city against his innumerable lawsuits, he has long been regarded as an overzealous litigant, a publicity hound, and a colossal pain in the ass. In the terse assessment of one of the city's lawyers, "Norman Siegel has the worst sense of humor of anyone I've ever met."

As Siegel likes to point out, though, he often prevails in court, as he did recently on behalf of the black Hebrew Israelites and their amplified prophecies of doom. The city had effectively tried to banish the group from Times Square, where for years its members had been ranting against whites, in the process making the lives of tens of thousands of people just a bit more miserable every day. Siegel argued that inflicting such misery was constitutionally protected, and he is now pursuing damages for the group from the city.

Until recently, Siegel's public image consisted largely of this kind of dubious, if high-minded, achievement. In the press, he was often parodied as a gadfly for all seasons, the one person in New York who could be counted on to rail against a policy that everyone else was embracing, or to defend the indefensible. But gradually, after City Hall was cordoned off, and then more rapidly, after the slaying of Amadou Diallo, the state of civil liberties in New York ceased to seem a joking matter. Almost every day now, somewhere in the city there is some kind of protest organized around the N.Y.C.L.U.'s favorite themes of due process and equal protection. Already several congressmen, the state comptroller, and assorted celebrities have got themselves arrested to signal their concern about these issues, and many others probably would have done so if it weren't for the fact that it takes several hours to get booked by the cops. The scale and the duration of the public outrage, which is entering its fourth month, have surprised even those who have helped promote and direct it.

Such is the enfeebled state of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's opposition that, although he has clearly been hurt by the protests, one would be hard-pressed to find another elected official who has been helped. Neither the public advocate, Mark Green, nor the city comptroller, Alan Hevesi, nor the City Council speaker, Peter Vallone, has had anything very forceful to say about the Diallo shooting, though all have mayoral ambitions. The city's best-known civil-rights leader cum ambulance chaser, the Reverend Al Sharpton, has, of course, tried to make up for this, but there are only so many times that the same man can be rehabilitated.

Almost by default, then, Siegel has emerged as one of the Mayor's most vigorous and credible antagonists. From the start of the Diallo protests, he has acted as a de-facto lawyer for the demonstrators, and he is increasingly sought out by protest organizers as the person who can articulate the principles they are fighting for. For Siegel, it appears that the vigils and the marches and the arrests represent an unlikely gift from history. As is rarely the case for a true believer, he has made his way from the margins of civic life to the center, without so much as adjusting his rhetoric or even trying to mute his obsessions.

"GIULIANI" IS A MAGGOT
POLITE POLICE STATE
ADOLF GIULIANI
CLASS SPORT

Siegel is like Giuliani in at least one respect: he'll carry on a fight beyond the point of no return. Photograph by Harry Benson.

ONE day toward the end of March, I arranged to join Siegel at a meeting of the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission, in lower Manhattan. Siegel was planning to speak during the public-comment period, to demand that the commission's administrative hearings, which are the functional equivalent of court proceedings, no longer be conducted in private. When he arrived, however, he found that the agenda offered no opportunity for public comment, and, since he is quite a stickler for procedure when it comes to making a fuss, he decided to leave without speaking. I met him in the lobby, where he was waiting with a leader of one of the cabdrivers' associations, Vijay Bali, who was trying to convince him that the agenda had been rewritten expressly to thwart his plans.

Siegel, as I subsequently learned more fully, has a great deal of patience for activities that many other people would consider a waste of time, and he seemed unfazed by the fact that we had all travelled downtown for nothing. Bali, for his part, seemed happy just to be along. Ever since last spring, when Siegel rushed into federal court to win permission for the city's yellow-cab drivers to demonstrate against new taxi rules, they have held him in enormous regard, and nowadays some refuse to accept payment for his fare. "We were treated not like human beings," Bali told me. "Norman gave us a semblance of self-respect."

Siegel's next stop that day was Police Headquarters, where those protesting the Diallo shooting were staging tightly choreographed acts of civil disobedience. A buzz went through the crowd when Susan Sarandon, surrounded by cameras, made her way to the front of the line to get arrested. While I waited with Siegel in the brilliant early-spring sunshine, he kept darting over to speak to various members of the N.Y.P.D. brass, to make sure that the arrests were going smoothly and that the cops weren't planning to bump up the charges, because if they did he was planning to challenge them in court. A lot of people approached him, mostly to offer thanks or congratulations. One man, who was white, said, "You deserve a lot of credit, Norman," and another, who was black, said, "I just want to tell you, as long as people like you are around, I think there's some hope for our country."

Siegel was obviously pleased by the praise, and by the whole festively angry multiracial scene, which reminded him, he said, of some of the great demonstrations of his youth. Still, he had some nagging concerns that prevented him from entering fully into the spirit of the event. Periodically, the crowd would shout for the cops accused of killing Diallo to be arrested, but since at that point a grand jury was still investigating the case, Siegel pointed out to me, such a move would be a clear violation of due process. And when the chant "No Justice! No Peace!" went up, Siegel told me that he could not really condone it, because the second phrase seemed to imply a threat of violence. Thus, when others yell "No Justice!," Siegel will join in, but he remains silent when they scream "No Peace!"

"That's the problem when you think through all these slogans and try to be consistent," he said.

LOST BRAINS

He felt as if his brains
were jumping out of his head.
It had begun when he saw her
flirting with another man
at a party. The man was a
nobody who liked to pick up
girls. She swore that no one
else meant anything to her.
But when it happened again,
this time in a crowded bar,
his head started spinning
and he knew that his brain
was going to jump out through
his ears. Without her he would
become a nobody too.

—JAMES LAUGHLIN

SIEGEL'S role model is Chuck Morgan, who gave him his first job in the A.C.L.U. when he was fresh out of New York University School of Law, in 1968. By that time, Morgan had become a legendary figure in the civil-rights movement. A white Southerner, he had delivered a famous speech to businessmen in Birmingham, Alabama, accusing them of silent complicity in a church bombing, and he had sued to get Julian Bond seated in the Georgia House of Representatives. Several times in our conversations, Siegel quoted Morgan to me, trying to twist his Brooklyn accent into something approaching a Southern drawl. Morgan "taught me stamina," Siegel said at one point. "He would always say to me, 'It's great if you're smart. Went to Harvard or Yale? That helps. But stamina's the key. Outlast the bastards, Norm, that's the key.'" While Siegel was working for Morgan in Atlanta, most of the famous figures in the civil-rights movement, as well as most of the famous journalists covering them, passed through the A.C.L.U. office, usually, it seems, at the cocktail hour, and they would gather around Morgan's desk to schmooze and drink bourbon. Siegel used to sit in the corner, just taking it all in. To this day, a poster of Bond, looking very young and melancholy, hangs in Siegel's Manhattan office.

After a few years in Atlanta, Siegel moved back to New York, and ended up working on the N.Y.C.L.U.'s campaign to impeach Richard Nixon. He met the woman he lives with, Saralee Evans, when he hired her to coördinate the many volunteers the campaign attracted. (She is now a civil-court judge in Manhattan.) It was a heady time for Siegel, and for the A.C.L.U. as a whole, which picked up more than twenty-five thousand new members the year before Nixon resigned. A few years later, in 1977, when the A.C.L.U. took on the case of the Nazis who wanted to march through Skokie, Illinois, the group proceeded to lose about the same number of members, but by that time Siegel had left the organization and was working with Morgan in private practice in Washington, D.C.

Siegel returned to the group in 1985 to head the N.Y.C.L.U., and soon the New York affiliate had its own Skokie-like experience. Although the N.Y.C.L.U. depends on the national organization for much of its funding, it has almost complete discretion in cases, and the first major case Siegel took was that of Joyce Brown, a.k.a. Billie Boggs, a homeless, mentally disturbed woman who lived next to a heating grate on the Upper East Side. The city had Brown committed to Bellevue under a new and ostensibly humanitarian policy; she called the N.Y.C.L.U. to come and get her out. The case dragged on for weeks, becoming not just national but international news, and when it was over Siegel was regarded in many circles as just as nutty as she was.

In the mid-eighties, as the connection between the deinstitutionalizing of the mentally ill and the city's homelessness problem was becoming ever more apparent, New Yorkers, for reasons both selfish and not, were growing increasingly distressed by the recumbent bodies they had to step over on the way home. The Joyce Brown case played to these complicated emotions in a way that Siegel never seemed to fully appreciate. Even as he argued that the city had an obligation to provide Brown with housing, he maintained that it had no right to keep her in an institution. He received a lot of hate mail, some of which he has kept. Eventually, though the key legal issues were not resolved, Brown was released, and Siegel took her to speak at Harvard Law School, further infuriating his critics. As the coup de grâce, he hired her to work at the N.Y.C.L.U.'s office, a move that even some of his own board members found inappropriate. The arrangement didn't last long, but Siegel still keeps in touch with Brown, and he brings her back a T-shirt from each of his trips.

The case Siegel made for Brown was, in legal terms, unremarkable, but it was easily parodied as promoting the right to freeze to death on the street. In the years since, Siegel has been a favorite target of ridicule, especially in the city's tabloid newspapers, which have called him, among other things, a "kneejerk naysayer," a man "who never met an anti-social behavior he didn't defend," and "New York's pre-eminent civil-liberties zany."

Yet it is precisely the cases that are most easily lampooned which Siegel seems to remember most fondly. Take, for instance, the case of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization. The Hibernians organize the city's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, and, even though it now seems to be cherished mainly as an excuse for public drunkenness, the group's leaders say that it is a religious event, and on religious grounds they will not allow gays and lesbians to march as a group. In 1993, the city tried to deal with this problem by giving the parade permit to an organization that promised to be more inclusive. Siegel went to court on behalf of the Hibernians, arguing that the city could not award a permit based on a parade's message, an argument that eventually prevailed. But at the same time Siegel advocated that the Hibernians' rivals should also be allowed to hold a parade, just one block over. (No one ever took him up on this suggestion, for fairly obvious reasons.) Recounting the whole tortured saga to me recently, Siegel was still convinced that his position—or positions—made absolute sense, and he concluded by saying, "I loved that case."

SIEGEL grew up in Brooklyn, in Borough Park, at a time when the neighborhood was almost totally Jewish and Italian. His father, who died when Siegel was twenty-five, was a foreman in a printing shop. Siegel's mother is eighty-three, and she now lives in a neighborhood that some like to call West Brighton, because it sounds tony, but that Siegel prefers to call Coney Island, because it doesn't. Siegel says that he can tell a lot about a person just by knowing where he went to high school, and he goes back to his own high school, New Utrecht, every Friday morning to teach a class on the dangers of stereotyping.

Inside the N.Y.C.L.U. there are many raps against Siegel—that he is a lousy fund-raiser, that he is a not much better administrator, and that he is too focussed on New York City at the expense of upstate. Outside the organization, the major complaint is that he is an insatiable publicity seeker. "I think that a part of Norman is driven to be on television," the city's corporation counsel, Michael Hess, told me. "I find that more and more he runs to the press." Even some of Siegel's allies said that they sometimes cringe to see his face, looking just a little too eager, on the tube once again. "He really needs to say 'no' to certain media requests" is how one of them delicately put it.

As a reporter, I can attest that Siegel is, indeed, almost always available to the media, from early in the morning until late at night, on weekends, and even when he is out of the country on vacation. Many of the stories he recounted to me included not only the way the event had been covered in the *Times* but also the names of the various reporters who had called him about it. Yet all this attending to the media, I discovered, represents a relatively small part of Siegel's typical, very long day. Practically every evening, I could have accompanied him to some obscure community-board meeting or forum where he would be trying to persuade some group to pass some resolution that was, eventually, supposed to lead to some sort of action on a cause he holds dear. Ira Glasser, the executive director of the A.C.L.U., who has known Siegel for years, told me that he has never met anyone who goes to more neighborhood meetings, and more willingly. "He not only tolerates it," Glasser said. "He loves it."

The class that Siegel teaches at New Utrecht, with Galen Kirkland, a black

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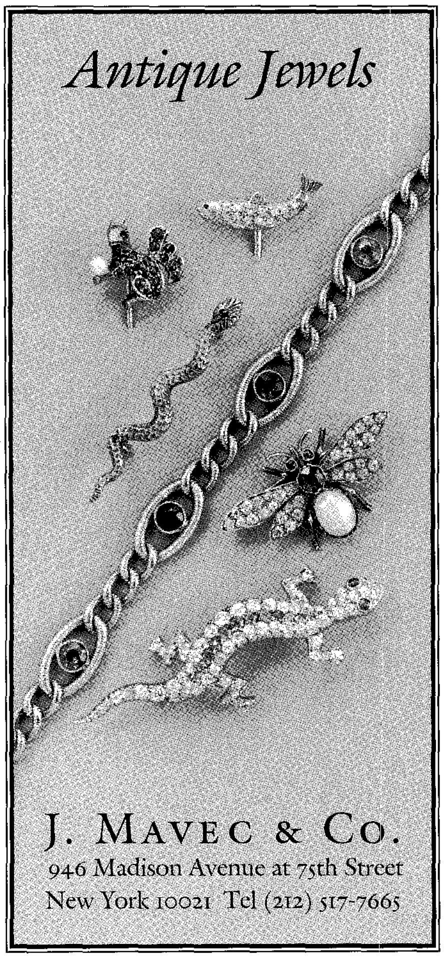
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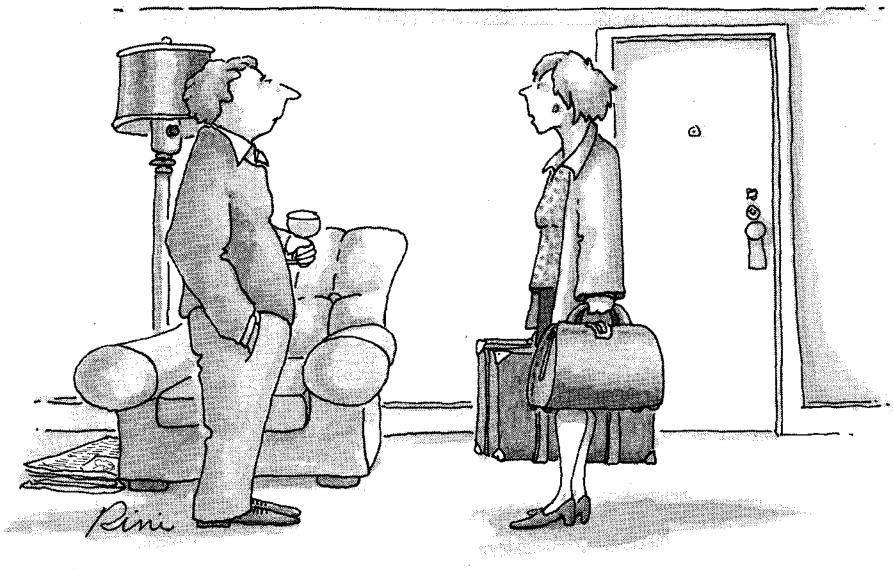
lawyer, is another good example of his many less glamorous projects. Siegel got the idea in 1989, after a black teen-ager, Yusuf Hawkins, was killed in a racially motivated assault not far from the high school, whose student body is still significantly Italian but is now also part Russian, Hispanic, Asian, and black. The course is supposed to challenge the students to examine their own tendency to stereotype, but, when I visited it, many of them seemed quite comfortable with the inevitability of stereotyping, and there were several moments of hilarity when they explained to Siegel just what racial or ethnic profile they themselves fit into. A hulking kid in a white T-shirt and gold chains, for example, was persuasively described by his peers as looking like someone who just "threw a body into the Hudson River."

AMONG the few people in New York City's public life who can match Siegel for intensity is Mayor Giuliani. The two share an unwavering faith in their own causes and a willingness to pursue fights beyond the point where most other people, with less stamina, would simply give up. As it happens, they are the same age, and they even went to law school together, at N.Y.U., though, while Giuliani was in the library making law review, Siegel was outside protesting.

Siegel is outspoken in his dislike for the Mayor: at one point he described Giuliani to me as a "weirdo" and at another as "half human." But he is also—in an ironic sort of way—openly grateful to him. Starting last spring, when the Mayor tried to prevent the cabdrivers from tying up traffic in protest, then tried to deny a permit to what was optimistically called the Million Youth March, and then banned demonstrations in front of City Hall, Giuliani has provided the N.Y.C.L.U. with high-profile cases almost on a monthly basis. "He was a gift to us," Siegel said. "The issues reminded me of when I was in the South, they were so clear-cut."

For one brief moment, Giuliani tried to reach out to Siegel, and for this, too, Siegel is grateful. In 1997, after Abner Louima was allegedly brutalized in a Brooklyn precinct house, the Mayor appointed Siegel to a task force charged with finding ways to improve police-community relations. The appointment, Siegel now says, was "a big mistake" by the Mayor, because it gave Siegel more credibility.

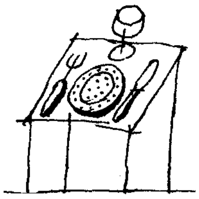
Siegel dates his own interest in police misconduct back to 1988 and the Tompkins Square Park riot, during which police were caught on videotape beating up ordinary citizens. Scandalously few of the cops were ever disciplined, and Siegel became convinced that the N.Y.P.D. could not be trusted to police itself. Over the next few years, he schlepped from community-board meeting to community-board meeting, pushing for the creation of an independent Civilian Complaint Review Board, which was finally established in early 1993. By the time Siegel was appointed



"I've decided to stand by another man for a while."

to the Mayor's task force, however, he had already lost faith in the board. "It was probably one of the most frustrating things I've experienced," he told me.

Once on the task force, Siegel quickly became Giuliani's goad, claiming publicly that the Mayor wasn't taking the group's efforts seriously. The Mayor, for his part, denounced Siegel for leaking to the press. In the end, the task force issued a majority report, calling for, among other things, a residency requirement for city cops and a strengthening of the complaint board. Siegel and two other members issued a dissenting report, written in a sustained tone of high dudgeon, calling for those things plus a special prosecutor to investigate police brutality. But the Mayor, instead of just rejecting the minority report as another example of Norman's being Norman, openly mocked the majority report, too—a move that, with the Diallo shooting, proved to be extremely shortsighted.



These days, Siegel is very much at the center of the post-Diallo civil-rights coalition, and is being sought out by a lot of people who not long ago would barely return his phone calls. He is constantly shuttling between meetings with the police and the protest leaders, who include the head of the city's powerful health-care workers' union, Dennis Rivera; former Deputy Mayor Bill Lynch; and, of course, Sharpton. Rivera, who recently woke Siegel up at around six o'clock in the morning to help draft a set of goals for the coalition, told me, "In fifteen minutes with him on the phone, I learned more about police brutality than I did sitting in meetings with other people for days." Not surprisingly, the goals ended up echoing the task force's dissenting report, so when several thousand people marched across the Brooklyn Bridge recently one of the things they said they were demonstrating for was the appointment of a special police prosecutor. Just last week, Siegel took on the case of a New York City policewoman who learned that she had been fired after testifying—supposedly anonymously—about abuses in the unit whose members killed Diallo.

Siegel has been around long enough to know that the outrage generated by Diallo's death will eventually dissipate, and he is already planning for that day. Currently, his pet project is what he likes to call New York Summer 1999—a sort of reverse twist on the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964—during which Southerners would come North to register voters and learn about New York's civil-rights problems. It is Siegel's contention that New York City today is in some ways just as segregated as the South was thirty-five years ago, and he is hoping that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference will help sponsor the project.

The whole idea is quintessentially Siegelian, and when he explained it to me it struck me as at once admirable and hopelessly misguided. Although it is moving to find someone who still adheres to the fundamentally optimistic, we-shall-overcome message of the civil-rights movement, somehow when you are working with Al Sharpton instead of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the history-repeating-itself-as-farce adage seems only too apt. "Norman is a believer," Michael Meyers, the executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition, told me. "He believes in people even when he knows better."

When I asked friends of Siegel's about him, several used the word "naïve" to describe him, which, given his extensive list of media contacts and his near-ubiquity on local television, at first sounded preposterous to me. Eventually, though, after sitting with him while he waited more than two hours to testify at a City Council committee hearing, the description began to make sense. Siegel not only believes that we are all better off with the Hebrew Israelites in Times Square and that the cops ought to be held more accountable and that testifying at excruciatingly boring City Council hearings is important; he also believes that all these things are connected, and that if he can just get to enough people and explain this to them it will make a difference. Clearly, he owes the prominence he enjoys today to the Mayor, but even after Giuliani moves on and the television appearances become less frequent Siegel, it seems safe to say, will still be doing what he has always done. He will still be fighting the good fight, or at least what he imagines it to be. ♦

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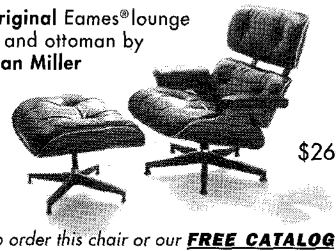

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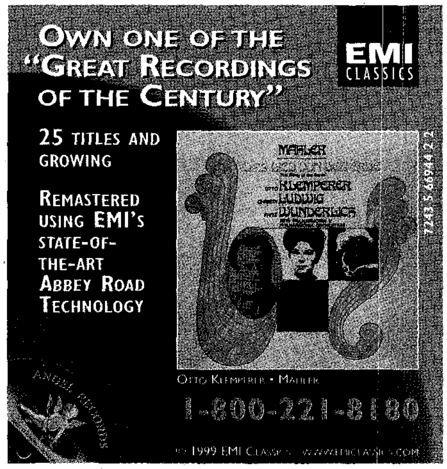

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MEDICAL DISPATCH

PET SCAN

In the hunt for genes linked to disease and to behavior, the dog may prove to be man's best friend.

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

Elaine Ostrander, a geneticist at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in Seattle, is awakened each morning around seven by Tess, her purebred Border collie. When I spoke with Ostrander not long ago, a steady cold rain was falling, but the weather had not deterred her and Tess from their morning ritual in a park near her house. Ostrander runs Tess hard for fifteen minutes, and then they play for fifteen minutes, with Ostrander throwing a ball to the far end of a field, and Tess fetching it. Border collies are herding dogs, bred for alertness, focus, and determination. "They like to be kept busy," Ostrander says. "She needs to burn off her early-morning energy." They return home, clean off the park mud, and go together to the Hutchinson Center. Ostrander's laboratory there has all the standard steel and enamel fittings of molecular biology, including high-speed centrifuges, DNA sequencers, and P.C.R. machines. The only clue to her particular specialty comes from the art on the laboratory walls: framed prints and photographs of dogs. Tess nestles into her place on the floor next to Ostrander's desk. When a visitor enters, Tess gets up and approaches. "She helps keep order in the laboratory," Ostrander says. "She herds my students and postdocs."

To help doctors treat psychiatric disorders in humans, scientists are mapping the genes that make spaniels snap and huskies cower.

WILLIAM STEIG

A forty-year-old woman with straight brown hair and sharp green eyes, Elaine Ostrander, along with a small network of colleagues and collaborators, is mapping the dog genome.

The DNA of dog and that of man are sufficiently alike so that gene maps of inherited canine diseases will help identify the genes for their human counterparts. Moreover, the dog genome promises to help with the search for the genetic basis of behavior. Purebred dogs have distinct temperaments, and with an accurate map the genes that determine their behavior can be identified—telling us what makes, say, Border collies like Tess so attentive, tenacious, and goal-driven. By contrast, cowering huskies and snappish spaniels may hold clues to treating psychiatric disorders in human beings. People and their pets, it turns out, may resemble each other even more than you'd think.

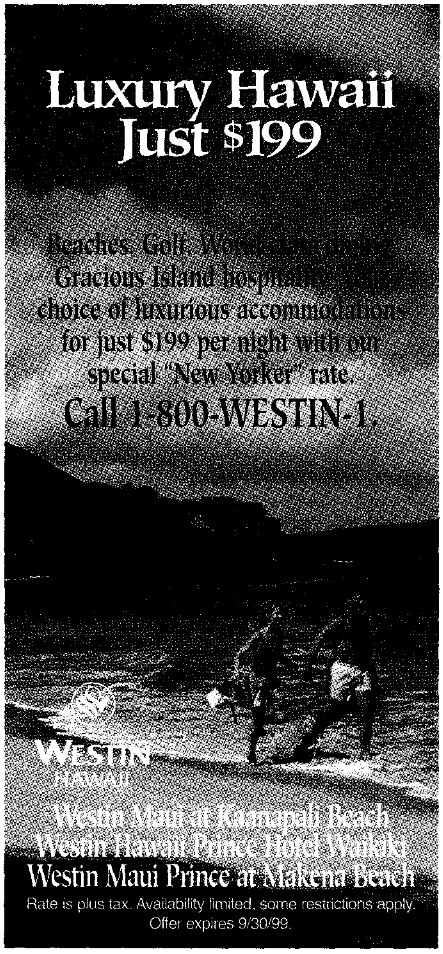
Dogs, as a species, were created by man. In the standard Darwinian model, natural forces in the wild would have selected for the perpetuation of those genes that favored survival and procreation. But dogs came into being through a process of artificial selection, when human beings, probably around a hundred thousand years ago, began to domesticate gray wolves into *Canis familiaris.* Man bred these animals to suit his work purposes and to be compatible with his social structures and his social behavior. Canines were trained to serve as hunters, trackers, herders, and sentinels, as well as playmates for children and companions for adults. The lives of man and dog became so closely integrated that we began to breed them for behaviors that were functional surrogates of our own. In the ancient Middle East, where grain was cultivated and livestock was husbanded, people bred dogs that had protective instincts. During the Middle Ages in Europe, many dogs were bred in monasteries, with preference given to traits seen as Christian, such as loyalty, coöperation, and affection. And over the past century man has shaped canine evolution even more systematically, by establishing breeds that meet kennel-club standards.

The way to select for prized physical and behavioral attributes—the ability to hunt foxes, say, or to guide the blind—is tight inbreeding. A chosen sire is often mated within a closed gene pool, and sometimes within its family: fathers may be paired with daughters, or brothers with sisters. But, although inbreeding of this sort preserves the desired trait, it also brings together dangerous recessive genes, which are normally diluted by mating outside the family. After several generations of inbreeding, valued lines of purebred show and performance dogs frequently develop serious physical ailments and behavioral disorders.

For a medical geneticist, these problems present an opportunity. Many of the hereditary canine illnesses have close human analogues. But they're vastly easier to find and study in dogs. Purebred dogs are far more genetically homogeneous than any human population, and that makes it easier to trace and identify recessive genes in them. You can amplify recessive traits by directed breeding, and, since dogs produce many more offspring than people do, it's easier to study how different disease-linked genes interact. And, of course, research into behavioral genetics has come to rely heavily upon separated-at-birth siblings—a circumstance that is the norm with puppies but not with people.

Elaine Ostrander and Mark Neff, her collaborator at Berkeley, recently produced a map of the dog genome. It is being used to find the mutations responsible for a host of canine diseases: boxers with progressive weakness of the heart muscle, or cardiomyopathy; keeshonden with holes in the septum of the heart and a misshapen aorta, a condition called tetrology of Fallot; spaniels with spinal muscular atrophy, a degenerative neurological disease; Scottish terriers and chihuahuas with myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune disorder; and beagles and St. Bernards with epilepsy. Each of these dog disorders corresponds to a human one.

Greg Acland, a veterinary ophthalmologist and geneticist at Cornell, is using the map to investigate canine blindness. I recently watched Acland, an Australian with the blunt language, and girth, of an aging rugby player, as he examined one of his research subjects. The dog was mid-sized, with a rich mahogany coat, but I couldn't identify the breed. "The blindness gene we're studying originated in a line of Irish setters, and that accounts for the coloring," Acland told me. "We used beagles to crossbreed with the setters.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As Acland approached the dog from the side, there was no reaction. Only when he was directly in front of the dog did it raise its head and move its snout to sniff. "The dog with retinal atrophy follows the same course as people with retinitis pigmentosa," Acland explained, referring to the most common cause of inherited human blindness, which currently affects perhaps a hundred thousand Americans. "First, there is loss of night vision, then loss of peripheral perception—that's called tunnel vision. Only very late is there complete blindness." Acland's dog was in the tunnel-vision stage. The kinds of dogs that are bred to serve as guide dogs for the blind are confident, flexible, and loyal, but some of them are also prone to retinal atrophy; sometimes such a dog will suffer the fate of its master. Since to breed and train such a dog costs between thirty and forty thousand dollars, the disorder has important economic ramifications. But the main impetus of Acland's work is to speed the search for blindness genes in man.

THE first dog gene that will directly illuminate the pathology of a human disease may well be the one for narcolepsy. "We are close—it'll be a few months to a year," Dr. Emmanuel Mignot, a psychiatrist and the director of Stanford University's Narcolepsy Center, told me in ebullient, French-accented English. "The symptoms and signs of narcolepsy are so similar in dog and man it's scary."

Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder that affects about one in every two thousand Americans. It usually develops during adolescence, causing excessive daytime sleepiness, and it is frequently missed by physicians, who mistakenly ascribe the symptoms to teen-age ennui, late-night parties, or covert drug use. In one study, the average time from the onset of symptoms to its diagnosis was fourteen years. Patients have abnormal REM sleep, and they suffer "hypnagogic," or dreamlike, auditory and visual hallucinations while they're dozing. The signature manifestation of narcolepsy is cataplexy—a sudden loss of muscular control which can last several seconds or several minutes. An episode is often triggered by pleasurable emotions: a narcoleptic might start laughing at a good joke and abruptly crumple to the floor.

Dr. Mignot oversees Stanford's colony of twenty-seven narcoleptic Doberman pinschers. As far as I could tell, his Dobermans looked like any others, with their fearsome visage, deep-brown eyes trained forward, sharp ears raised in surveillance. I observed a group of five Dobermans moving with typical tightly coiled grace, and then saw them fed—presented with the rare treat of beefsteak. After the first bite, the dogs dropped suddenly, their limbs sprawling, their heads lolling back. "We stimulate the Dobermans with an excellent cuisine," Dr. Mignot explained. "They experience the pleasure of the good food. And then they collapse." Those sleek, muscular creatures now looked like rag dolls tossed on the floor.

"It is a nightmare to look for a gene like this in humans," Dr. Mignot went on to say. "There are not enough families with several affected individuals." Once Mignot and his team at Stanford started using pedigree studies to study canine narcolepsy, they made the surprising discovery that canine narcolepsy seems to result from a single mutant gene.

"Our analysis of the region on the Doberman's chromosome and on the human chromosome shows them to be virtually identical," Dr. Mignot said. This means that once the dog gene is identified the human mutation will be easily pinpointed by the use of sequencing data from the Doberman study. The mystery of how a single gene can so alter cerebral function as to induce sleepiness, vivid hallucinations, and motor paralysis may soon be explained. Although finding a gene doesn't mean finding a treatment, it does mean that researchers can work back from the root cause. The mutant gene may be linked to a mutant protein, and a drug may be developed to correct for it.

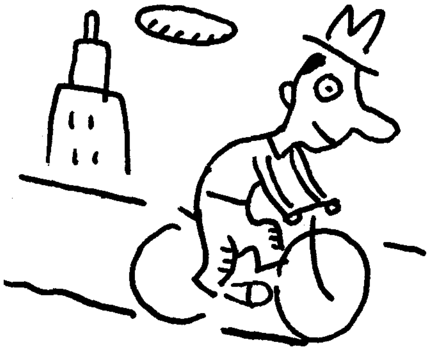
ALTHOUGH narcolepsy appears to be caused by a single gene, the distinct personalities of purebred dogs are polygenic, which is to say that they are determined by many genes acting in concert. And "personalities" is surely the right term: the way dogs act can seem eerily similar to the way we act, as the result of both domestication and our propensity for projecting our emotions upon our pets. The desirable temperament of each breed in the American Kennel Club's "Complete Dog Book," the bible of pedigrees, is elaborately anthropomorphic: boxers are meant to be "alert, dignified and self-assured," and, in the show ring, "should exhibit constrained animation"; rottweilers are "calm, confident and courageous," and exude "self-assured aloofness"; mastiffs display "grandeur and good nature . . . dignity rather than gaiety." The task of sorting out such polygenic traits isn't simple, but it helps to be able to study them in laboratory populations that can be inbred and crossbred.

While Ostrander is studying DNA sequences, Greg Acland, at Cornell, and Karen Overall, the director of the Behavior Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School, are working with groups of dogs in order to identify the genes that are responsible for several "neurotic" canine lines. Overall, a petite forty-three-year-old woman with waist-long blond hair, cool blue eyes, and glasses, is a veterinarian with expertise in both behavioral psychology and evolutionary biology, and she speaks with the sharp cadences of a rigorous experimentalist. Her work helped establish diagnostic criteria in animal behavior and led to the recent F.D.A. approval of Clomicalm, a psychotropic drug for dogs with separation anxiety—what headline writers dubbed "puppy Prozac."

Acland's and Overall's research has focussed on nervous pointers and shy Siberian huskies; doctors at the University of Pennsylvania are also studying bullterriers, fox terriers, and German shepherds, all of which exhibit obsessive-compulsive behavior—they may spend hours chasing their tails—and a line of English springer spaniels with poor impulse control: they react aggressively and capriciously to one another and to their handlers. "Breeders don't realize that when they select for refined forms of physical carriage those attributes are linked to behavioral genes," Karen Overall says. For example, the English springers bred for show promenade with their heads far forward, in an almost lunging posture. Several genes are believed to work together to produce such an appearance and gait, and they could include those which, in the species' evolutionary history, are linked to hunting and attacking. Hence the springer spaniels with impulsive aggression.

Among many huskies, such side effects of selection seem to have resulted in shyness. "The Siberian husky has a very special social structure," Acland says. "The Jack London myth—that in the Arctic you need a wolf dog, a primitive alpha male—is a lot of garbage. A good sled dog exhibits harmony. You need teamwork. The dog has to be rotated from the harness at the front of the sled, or it will become exhausted. There can't be fighting for position among the dogs, but deference." So the painful shyness could be an exaggerated expression of selected deference. Acland has bred a colony of husky crossbreeds in Pennsylvania, descendants of a Siberian husky named Earl. "He was a handsome, lovely dog, donated by a breeder who noticed that he was painfully shy," Acland says. The dog was comfortable with his owner; his extreme bashfulness emerged only when he encountered a stranger. "People like that trait," Acland notes. "It reinforces the feeling, 'This is *my* dog.'"

To study how the genes for shyness were inherited, the researchers mated Earl with a female beagle. The offspring included a female that was then mated with an unrelated male beagle. Among that dog's offspring were two very shy males. "This experiment shows, to a rough approximation, that shyness appears to be transmitted as a dominant trait," Acland says. But he emphasizes that the behavior is complex. There are different degrees of shyness in purebred huskies and in the offspring outbred with beagles, just as there are in people. "It's not binary," Acland says, "but a continuous, quantitative function of several genes."



If sled dogs are bred for team-spiritedness, pointers are bred to have a rigid posture and a tense focus, and the occasional appearance of "nervous" pointers seems to be a result. The pointers that Acland and Overall study are descended from a colony that was maintained at the University of Arkansas, in Fayetteville, in the early nineteen-seventies. "They were found by Pavlovian psychiatrists looking for natural animal models of neurosis," Karen Overall says. "The doctors hoped they could condition against the avoidance response, but it didn't succeed in these pointers."

In a spacious state-of-the-art facility at the University of Pennsylvania, nervous pointers and their unaffected littermates are housed together. The mid-sized, brown-and-white dogs occupy large, comfortable metal-mesh cages, with special vinyl floors so their paws are not trapped or irritated. There are long, broad runs for regular exercise. The cages are cleaned two or three times a day, and a staff of seasoned handlers scrupulously attends to the animals, providing both grooming and affection.

When Greg Acland approached an affected pointer, the dog was startled, its wary eyes widening and its jaw tightening. He entered the dog's cage and extended a comforting hand, but the pointer froze in place, its wiry body rigid and statue-still. The prominent flank muscles trembled visibly. Acland affectionately stroked the dog's side, but the animal only became more distressed. As he gently patted the pointer's head, it panicked, and assumed a wide-splayed stance, its front feet extending forward and its back arching. During a four-minute encounter, the pointer was mute, emitting not a bark or a squeal. After Acland left the cage, the dog stayed frozen for a little while. Only with measured caution did it turn its head to confirm Acland's exit. Blood samples obtained immediately after such interactions show high levels of cortisol, an adrenal stress hormone, and the release of muscle enzymes from the uncontrolled muscle shaking.

The pointer's littermates, though they have been reared in the same environment, have a completely different response. After sniffing Acland's hand, they responded eagerly to his affectionate gestures, barking at the caresses and tousling of their fur. They followed him as he walked toward the cage's exit, seeking more play, and barking loudly to protest his departure.

The shy huskies, descendants of Earl and unaffected dogs, have different signs of anxiety from those of nervous pointers. As Greg Acland approached a shy female, the animal did not immediately freeze but skulked to the back of the cage—"like a wallflower at a party," he said. The husky turned her distinctive black-and-white lupine head away from Acland, while watching him out of the corner of her eye. As Acland extended his hand, the husky quickly lowered her head and retreated further, cowering behind her frisky littermates. The dog's limbs began to tremble, and saliva poured from her clenched mouth. Acland moved his hand closer and spoke in a friendly voice. The shy husky dodged the gesture, digging her white hind legs into the floor and pressing her broad black flanks forcefully against the back wall of the cage.

"They are both anxious, but there are differences," Acland told me later. The shy husky, over time, has become comfortable with her daily handler. The nervous pointer has never done so, despite the best efforts of the regular caretakers. "It's hard to develop empathy with the affected pointers," Acland admitted. "They isolate themselves because of their anxiety and are never happy with anybody." He said that when he is directly in front of a dog and is trying to make eye contact "the pointer has a peculiar face, like an owl's—he stares right through you."

"We're always leery of making glib associations, but these responses in the nervous pointer and in the shy Siberian husky resemble forms of human anxiety disorders," Karen Overall said. In fact, when a measured amount of lactate, a harmless acidic solution, is given to the nervous pointers or the shy Siberian huskies, it triggers a state of uncontrolled anxiety—which is what the solution does in people with certain panic disorders. This suggests that a similar neurochemistry is at work in dogs and human beings.

"The genetic basis of these anxiety behaviors in dogs is complex," Overall told me, "and will not be solved as quickly as single-gene traits, like narcolepsy." But she believes that the dog research will be "priceless" for human psychiatry. She pointed out that primitive areas deep in the mammalian brain in canines and *Homo sapiens* are similar and have changed little in the course of evolution. "It is in these ancestral areas of the mammalian brain that studies of behavior in the dog will be most informative," she said. In human beings, a number of behavioral and affective disorders—panic attacks, outbursts of aggression, extreme anxiety—seem to involve various primitive sites, such as the caudate nucleus, the amygdala, and the hippocampus.

Whatever results come from Karen Overall's cages and Elaine Ostrander's DNA sequencers aren't likely to settle all our long-standing arguments about character and free will. And yet their genetic and biochemical findings will sharply focus these discussions. Though nearly everyone accepts the notion that the carriage and the personality of dogs arise from their breeding, there's no such consensus when it comes to our own propensities. We mostly prefer to imagine ourselves untethered by such twists of DNA. Still, Greg Acland, for one, seems to be reconciled to the idea. "Everyone who deals with dogs accepts our compatibility, accepts how owners resemble their breeds," he says. "Nobody wants to hear that when you grow up you turn into your father and mother. The older you get, though, the more you realize it's true." ♦

The question, "Does mathematics need new axioms?," is ambiguous in practically every respect.

- What do we mean by "mathematics"?
- What do we mean by "need"?
- What do we mean by "axioms"?

You might even ask, What do we mean by "does"?—*American Mathematical Monthly.*

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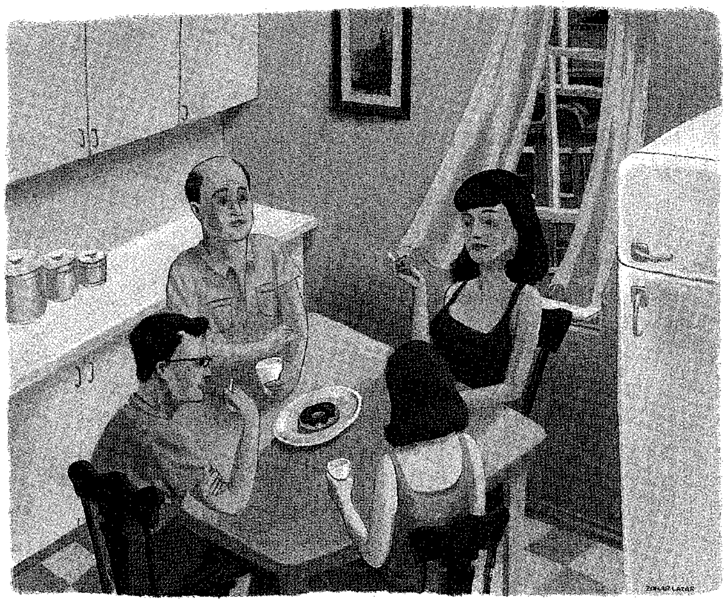
SHOUTS & MURMURS

WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT DOUGHNUTS

BY MICHAEL GERBER AND JONATHAN SCHWARZ

My friend Jim Forrer was talking. Jim Forrer is a professional fish measurer, and sometimes that gives him the right.

We were sitting around the kitchen table drinking gin and smoking. There was Jim and me and his wife, Elizabeth—Lisa, we called her, or sometimes Frank—and my wife, Carol.



ZOHAR LAZAR

There was a bowl of peanuts sitting on the table, but nobody ate many of them, because we were drinking and smoking. We were talking to ourselves like this: "Some of us are drinking more than we are smoking, and some of us are smoking more than we are drinking. Some of us are drinking and smoking about the same amount."

We went on drinking and smoking for a while, and somehow we got on the subject of doughnuts. Jim thought that real doughnuts were nothing less than spiritual doughnuts. He said he had spent ten minutes at a seminary before he had gone to fish-measuring school. He said he still looked back on those ten minutes as the most important minutes of his life.

Lisa said that the man she lived with before Jim had really liked doughnuts. She said he liked them so much that sometimes he would shoot at them with his gun, or flush them down the toilet. Sometimes, she said, he would put them on the living-room rug, climb up on the coffee table, and then jump off directly on top of them.

"It was scary," she said.

Carol and I smiled at each other.

Just then I dropped a peanut on the floor. It rolled behind the refrigerator. It was hard to get it out. It was very hard. But not so hard as other things. Other things had been harder.

"I like doughnuts as much as anyone," said Jim. He took a sip of his drink. "I like them at breakfast, and sometimes lunch."

"Now, hon, you know that's not true," said Lisa.

"What do you mean?" said Jim. "I like doughnuts a lot."

"No, you don't," said Lisa. "And I've never seen you eat a doughnut at lunch."

"Has it ever occurred to you once in your goddam life that I might not always tell you when I eat a goddam doughnut? Has that ever occurred to you once?" said Jim. "*Christ.*"

He took a sip from his drink, and then stopped, so he could smoke.

Jim's dog was scratching at the door, but we couldn't let him out. We were drinking and smoking.

When I met Jim he was still married to Nancy, his forty-fifth wife. They had been very much in love, but one day she inhaled too much helium and just floated away. Then he met Lisa.

When I introduced Jim to Carol he said that she was "a real person." I was glad, because my college girlfriend, Hillary, was a facsimile person. She was warm and loving, and with the proper equipment could be sent across the country in seconds. But things didn't work out.

"Has anyone ever seen a really big doughnut?" said Carol. "I did once. At a pawnshop in Maine." She paused. But she didn't say anything afterward, so actually it was less like a pause and more like a full stop.

"No," said Jim, taking a sip of his drink, "but I ate some miniature doughnuts once." He took a sip of the gin he was drinking. "I ate ten or twelve of them." Jim leaned back, rubbed his temples, and took a sip from his glass. "I thought," he said, pausing to take a sip of his drink, "that they were pretty," he continued, sipping from his drink, "good." Jim took one last sip, this time of my drink.

We reminisced about the best doughnuts we had had in our lives.

"The best doughnut I ever had," said Jim, "was when I was working for Harry Niven. Do you remember Harry, honey?"

"Of course," said Lisa.

"Compared to him I can't measure fish at all," said Jim. "I mean, there was a man who could measure a fish!"

We went on talking.

"The best doughnut I ever had," said Lisa, "was when I was dating Daniel." We all knew about Daniel. They had been deeply in love and on the brink of marriage when Lisa realized that he was a hologram.

"Hold on a second, hon," Carol said to Lisa. She turned to me. "Do you want to get divorced?"

"O.K.," I said.

Carol and I left and got divorced. Then we came back with our new spouses, Dave and Terri.

We all sat there talking, the six of us in the dark. We went on talking and talking, even after the gin ran out. Talking about doughnuts. Talking about doughnuts in the dark. ♦

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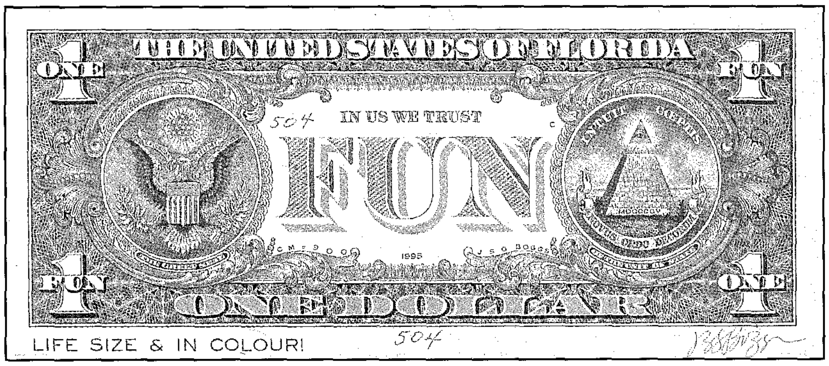
DEPT. OF AMPLIFICATION

A CONTEST OF VALUES

J. S. G. Boggs still makes money the old-fashioned way—he draws it.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER



Boggs's bills keep pushing the envelope, and the buttons of the authorities.

"LIFE SIZE & IN COLOUR!" ©1995 J. S. G. BOGGS

J. S. G. BOGGS is a no longer quite so young artist who has nevertheless managed to retain a certain flair, a certain panache, a certain *je ne paie pas.* For over a decade now, his consuming passion has been money—or, perhaps more precisely, value. What he likes to do is draw money—actual paper notes, one-sided but real size, in the denominations of standard currencies from all over the world—and then try to spend those drawings. There are many collectors avid to buy such drawings, but Boggs refuses to sell them. Rather, he prefers to find businessmen, hoteliers, restaurateurs, motorcycle salesmen, and the like who will accept his work in lieu of cash payment, as part of elaborately choreographed transactions, complete with receipts and proper change (which he is entirely willing to sell, at a hefty markup, to collectors, who, in turn, are invited to peruse the documentation for clues to the location of the most recent drawings). Those initial transactions are thus but the start of a larkish, though disconcertingly profound, econo-philosophical chase. For in a madcap Socratic fashion Boggs is raising all sorts of truly fundamental questions: What, precisely, is it that we value in art, or, for that matter, in money? How do we value one in terms of the other? Indeed, how do we place a value on anything at all? And, more specifically, how is it that we continue to credit the legitimacy of anything as confoundingly insubstantial as paper money? The subversive implications of these sorts of questions raise hackles of concern and even indignation among central bankers and treasury policemen all over the globe—authorities who regularly respond by trying to nail Boggs on a variety of counterfeiting charges, charges from which juries all over the world have tended just as regularly, ever so merrily, to spring him.

In 1988, in these pages I chronicled Boggs's triumph over the Bank of England, which had accused him of "reproducing" (the technical term) Her Majesty's sacrosanct pound notes. ("These are reproductions," Boggs had insisted passionately from the witness box, thrusting a fistful of standard pound notes into the air. "These, by contrast," he continued, fanning some of his own drawings in his other hand, "are *originals!*") In 1993, he triumphed over the Australian Federal Police. (In Sydney, the judge awarded the artist a twenty-thousand-dollar payment in compensation for his suffering.) Around that time, the American Secret Service was beginning to evince a more active concern regarding Boggs's shenanigans. In the United States, the relevant prohibition involves "executing" images "in the similitude" of American currency.

Not long ago, I decided to invite the

forty-four-year-old artist out for lunch ("Off the meter?" he asked. "Yeah," I assured him, "my treat") to find out how things have been going. At one point, Boggs, a spry, wiry squiggle of a fellow, recalled an evening where he'd settled the tab ("There, too, I was off the meter") with a conventional hundred-dollar bill, and the waiter had returned with a drawing of his change. How, I asked, had he reacted? "I accepted it ecstatically!" Boggs crowed.

Boggs went on regaling me with more of his recent art-and-money adventures. To date, he figures he's "spent" well in excess of a million dollars' worth of his own drawings. The transaction pieces in which they've resulted (framed compilations of drawing, receipt, change, and occasionally the thing bought) continue to compound handsomely in value in the secondary market, not uncommonly fetching upward of a hundred thousand dollars. His work has been acquired by institutions ranging from the British Museum to the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Smithsonian Institution.

WHAT, I asked him, had become of his scheme (dating back to 1992) to flood Pittsburgh with thousands of photocopies of Boggs bills (a million dollars' worth in face value), whose recipients would be encouraged to keep them in circulation through at least five further transactions? "Ach," he said, "that one finally didn't go very far—the Secret Service pretty much succeeded in smothering it. Not so much by harassing me personally as by blanketing the city—going to dealers, collectors, merchants, in print and over the airwaves—and putting the fear of God into everyone that passing, or even just accepting, any of those bills could subject them all to the direst of consequences."

I was struck by the paradox of Boggs's situation. Granted, he may well have lost thousands of dollars in sales and transactions owing to the fear of merchants and collectors at the prospect of run-ins with the Secret Service. By the same token, though, Boggs's rising worth in the market is clearly a direct function of his transgressive approach and the persecution it invariably provokes. Boggs has often said he'd have stopped of his own accord a long time ago if only the government hadn't been so insistently trying to stop him—which

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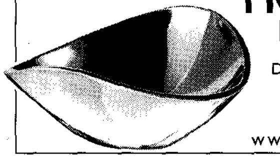

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may be true, as far as it goes. On the other hand, he's the kind of guy who'd probably just keep pushing (he once told me of another swell idea: a series of paintings with marijuana mixed into the pigment), who'd keep crossing suspect terrain until the government finally did move to stop him.

And stop him the government is now trying to do, with a vengeance. Over coffee and dessert, I asked Boggs just what was going on these days between him and the Feds, and he launched into the latest saga, which began in 1992, when the Secret Service raided his Pittsburgh studio. "They seized all my stuff," he said, "over thirteen hundred items, as an itemized inventory subsequently revealed—the bulk of my lifework—and then threatened to bust me, darkly implying that they were seizing all that stuff as part of an investigation inexorably leading toward my imminent arrest. But then, as the months passed, nothing happened. They suggested that they'd be back for more, and over the ensuing months they regularly threatened further raids, but, in the event, at least up till now, they didn't seize anything else. As I say, they regularly contacted dealers, collectors, museum people, and others, warning them all off my work, as if I had the plague. But they didn't bust me. On the other hand, neither did they return my work."

In part owing to the considerable publicity generated by his plight, Boggs was able to secure the services of a high-powered attorney, Kent Yalowitz, who is based in the Manhattan office of the blue-chip New York–Washington, D.C., firm of Arnold & Porter. In September of 1993, the firm filed a civil suit on Boggs's behalf before the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia. (One may suspect that getting them to do so was part of the government's strategy all along, since the Secret Service, as defendants, could now request that the case be heard by a sober-minded judge and not by one of those peskily independent juries.)

As part of the initial filing, Yalowitz included a full-scale reproduction of one of Boggs's drawings. "You can't do that!" the United States attorney had sputtered. "It's against the law!" To which Yalowitz calmly replied, "Indict me." He left the reproduction of the drawing in, and, needless to say, he wasn't indicted.

Yalowitz's plea on Boggs's behalf, argued before U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth during two days of hearings later that fall, sought the return of Boggs's property and the suspension of all ongoing persecution. His argument essentially consisted of two parts. Judge Lamberth was being asked, in the first instance, to declare once and for all that, in the absence of any imputation of Boggs's intent to defraud, his work was self-evidently not in violation of any law. Short of that, the Judge was being asked to order the government, in effect, to put up or shut up: either to bring a criminal case against Boggs, in which he could openly defend himself before a jury of his peers, or to cease its ongoing, open-ended persecution of the artist and to return his property forthwith.

In December of 1993, Judge Lamberth declined altogether to rule on the second part of Yalowitz's petition, limiting himself to a forceful judgment in the Secret Service's favor regarding the first half: the law forbidding the making of "obligations" in the "similitude" of United States currency was fairly straightforward, in the Judge's opinion, and Boggs's work arguably fell well afoul of it. Declaratory relief denied.

Yalowitz and Boggs then appealed to a three-judge panel of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ("One of whose members," Boggs now recalled for me, "happened—swear to God—to be stone blind! Seeing Eye dog and everything! Which seemed a bit odd in a case like this, but go figure"). In December of 1995, that court generally affirmed Lamberth's ruling, but dodged the "put up or shut up" issue, sending it back to Lamberth for further adjudication.

It took almost two more years before that part of the case received a proper hearing. "It was a really strange scene," Boggs said. "And quite tough, let me tell you, for me to sit calmly through. Essentially, the lawyers were arguing over whether my drawings were more like pornography or more like hard-core drugs. If they were more like pornography, which is what my own guy was arguing, then we were dealing with a question of censorship versus free expression, and it ought to

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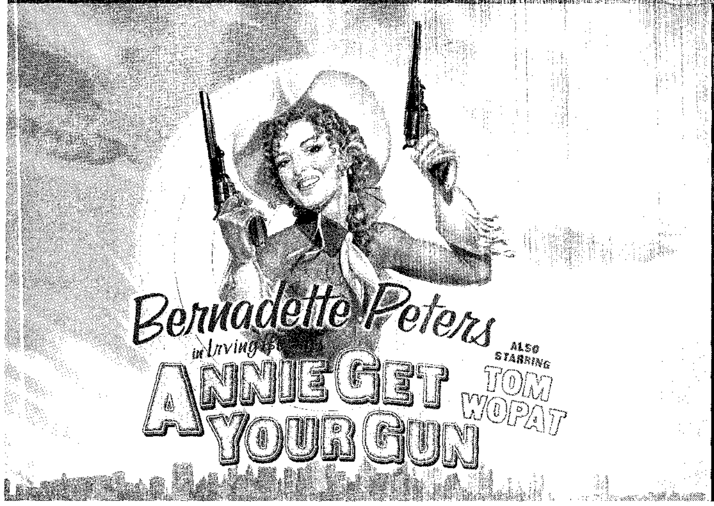

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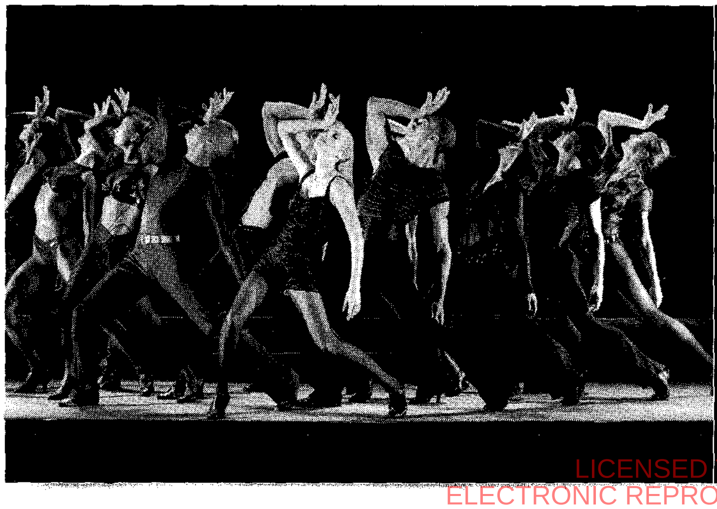
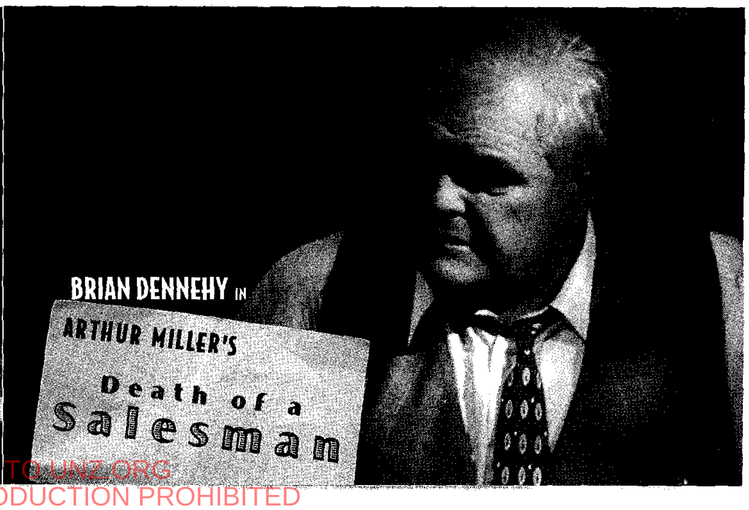
Arthur Miller's masterpiece returns to Broadway starring Brian Dennehy in "a production that achieves something rare and splendid," according to the *Times*. John Lahr of *The New Yorker* says, "The play is a defining part of the century's story; its revival is not to be missed." **Eugene O'Neill Theatre, 230 West 49th Street, 212-239-6200, or visit www.deathofasalesman.com.**





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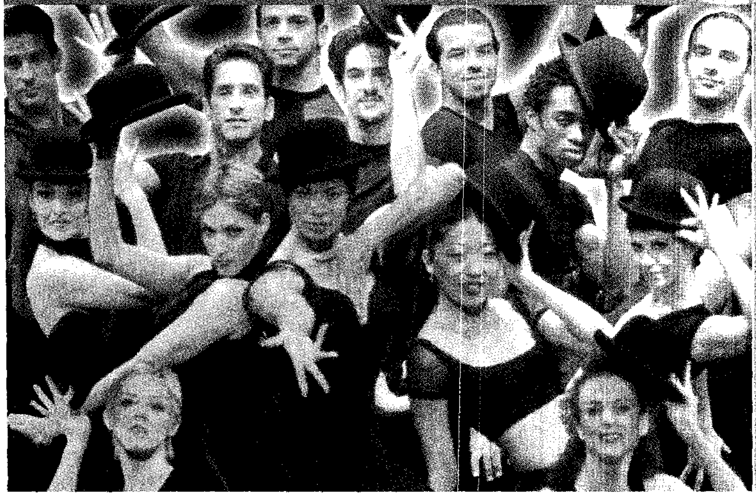
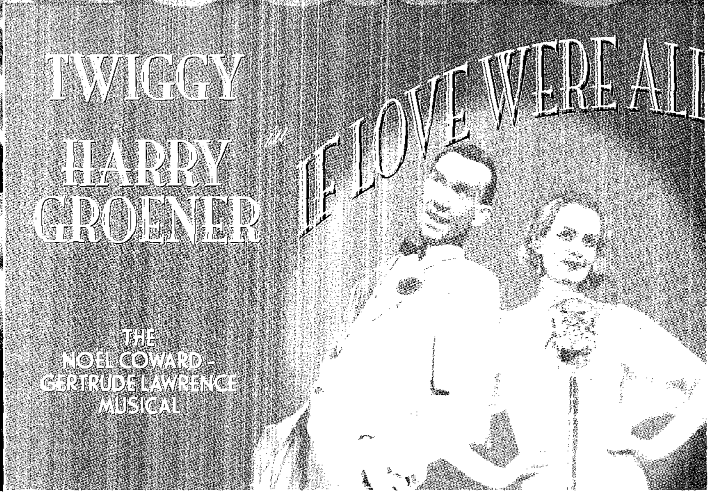
SPOTLIGHT ON theatre




TWIGGY
HARRY GROENER
in
IF LOVE WERE ALL
THE NOËL COWARD - GERTRUDE LAWRENCE MUSICAL

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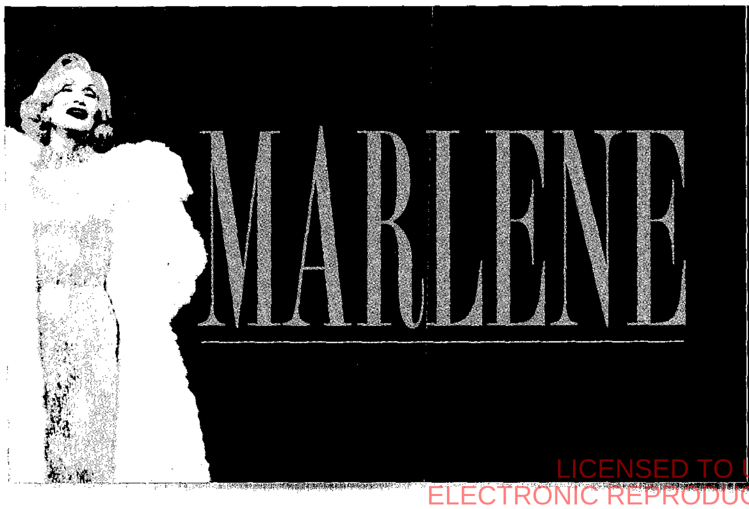
Winner of the Tony® Award for Best Musical and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, "Rent" is "the breakthrough musical of the nineties." It's playing now in San Francisco at the Golden Gate Theatre, 1 Taylor Street, 415-512-7770, and will be in Boston (June 15th-July 25th) at The Shubert Theatre, 265 Tremont Street, 800-447-7400. **Nederlander Theatre, 208 West 41st Street, 212-307-4100.**



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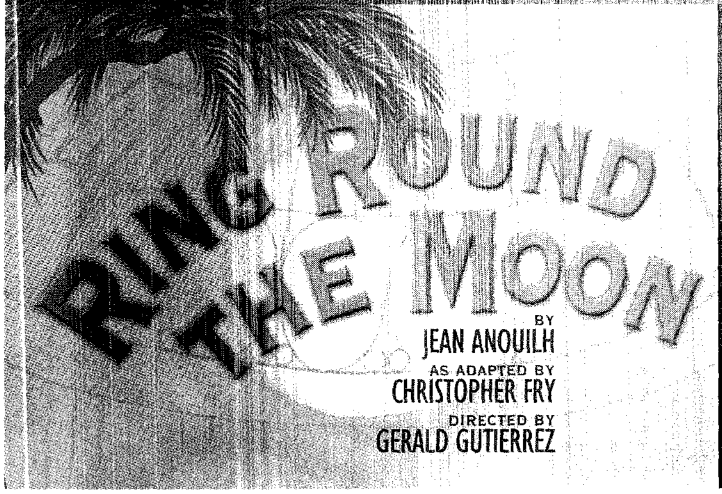

SNAKEBIT

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SNAKEBIT

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Roundabout's magnificent new production of James Goldman's comic masterpiece, "The Lion in Winter," is the theatrical event of this Broadway season. It is "ferociously good," raves the *Post*. Tony® Award-winners "Stockard Channing and Lawrence Fishburne are riveting...suberb...marvelous!" adds WNBC-TV. This is a strictly limited engagement. **Roundabout Theatre Company, 1530 Broadway, 212-719-1300.**

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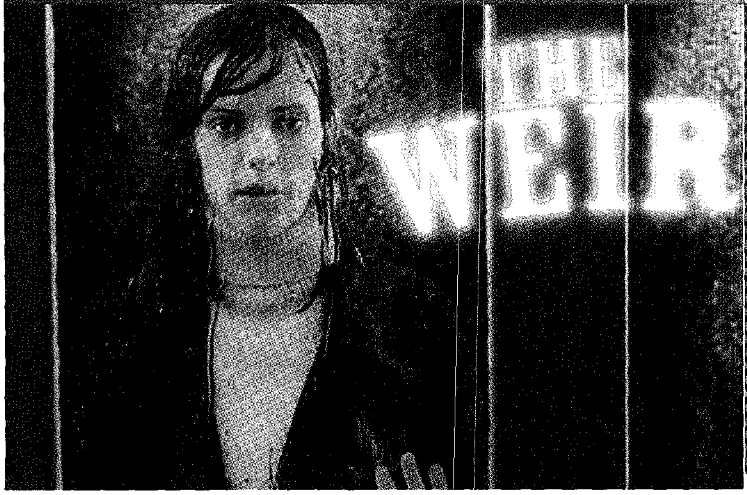

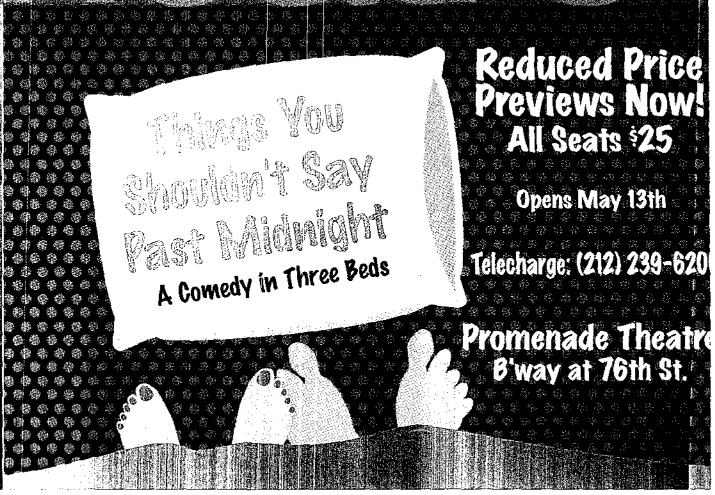
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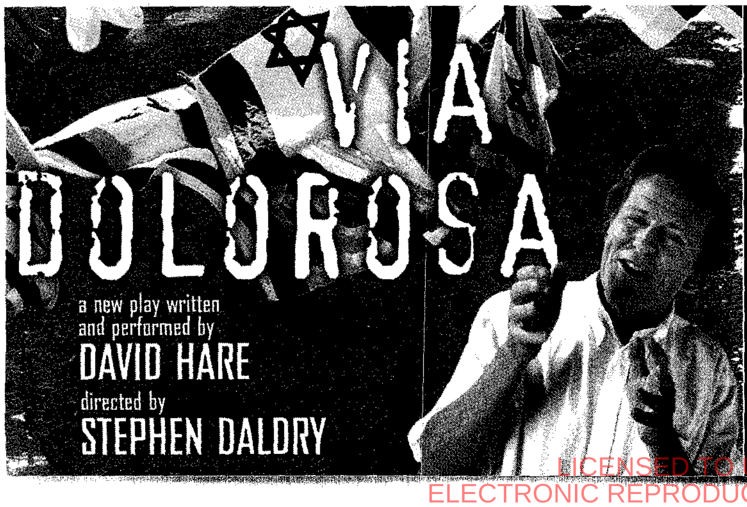
VIA DOLOROSA

"Funny, sad, deeply engaging, and truly theatrical! As good plays always will, 'Via Dolorosa' finds the echoing poetry within the chaos that is life. Even as the play examines irresoluble strife in the Middle East, it finds the beauty within," said Ben Brantley of the *Times*. **Lincoln Center Theater at the Booth, 222 West 45th Street, 212-239-6200.**

WIT

"Wit" has been hailed by New York critics: Nancy Franklin calls it "a thrilling experience—its pleasures amount to an amazing grace." And John Simon calls the incomparable Kathleen Chalfant "gallant, glorious, and heroic." Don't miss Margaret Edson's "Wit," directed by Derek Anson Jones. **Union Square Theatre, 100 East 17th Street, 212-307-4100.**


VIA
DOLOROSA
a new play written
and performed by
DAVID HARE
directed by
STEPHEN DALDRY

W;t

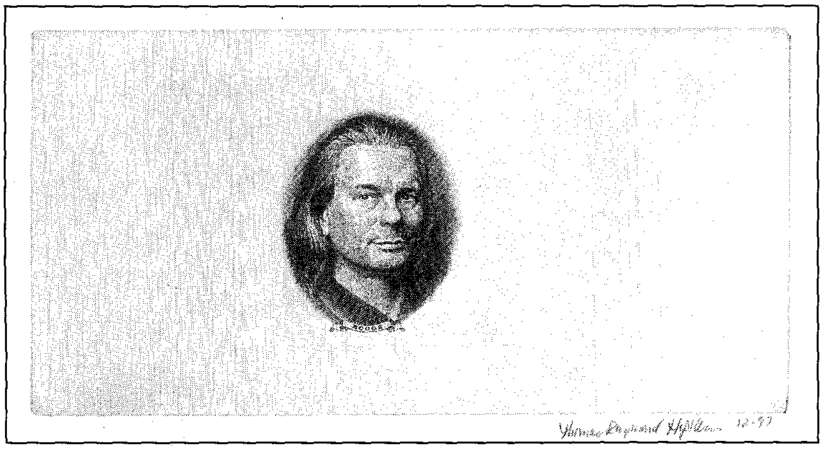
be up to a jury of my peers to make the final determination. But the government was countering that my bills were more like hard-core drugs, contraband and evil in and of themselves, and hence subject to seizure without recourse. I mean, obviously a heroin pusher, for instance, can't demand the return of his stash on property grounds, even if the government decides not to prosecute the case. In the end, the Judge, who again sided with the government, declared that as far as he was concerned what my drawings were most like—and this *really* blew my mind—was *kiddie* porn, so manifestly evil and so obviously self-evidently so when you came upon it that you didn't need a jury to make any further determination."

Appeals of that ruling took another few years to percolate up the system until suddenly, this spring, Boggs and Yalowitz stood on the verge of appealing to the Supreme Court itself (whose majestic, marble-columned building, incidentally, Boggs has for years been slotting, inappropriately, onto all his one-sided renditions of the back of a ten-dollar bill—precisely in anticipation of just such an eventuality). Boggs has been devoting a lot of his time lately to scaring up supporting briefs from anybody he can muster—fellow-artists, curators, historians, editorialists, critics, civil libertarians—in an attempt to coax the nine Justices into recognizing the manifest urgency of accepting his case for review as part of their next docket, this October.

I asked Boggs how much all this was costing and how he could afford it. "So far, my legal bills have come to about eight hundred thousand dollars," he said. "I was mentioning that figure to one of the Secret Service guys at the most recent hearing—crazy thing is that on a personal level I have all sorts of friends on their side—and he said, 'You think that's something? Our side has easily spent five times that!'

"But, anyway, I realized that I would have to come up with something special in this regard. So a while back I contacted Thomas Raymond Hipschen, the lead picture engraver with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, in Washington. He's the incredible artist who created the engravings for the Franklin on the new hundred-dollar bill, the Grant on the new fifty, and the Jackson on the new twenty. And I made him a side proposal, which he accepted. For starters, I offered my last Pittsburgh thousand-dollar drawing as a down payment for a steel-engraved portrait of me, actual-money scale. Which he proceeded to produce and which, I think you'll agree"—Boggs leaned over conspiratorially, gazed from side to side, and then pulled a sample impression out of a satchel—"he did quite handsomely. And I've now made eight impressions of this engraving as the basis for eight one-hundred-thousand-dollar-bill drawings. That's how I intend to pay—and . . . that's how I intend to go on paying."

Boggs smiled slyly. I suddenly realized that whether or not the Supreme Court agreed to entertain this particular suit of Boggs's—and, if it did, no matter how it ruled—the loser was likely to go on mounting fresh challenges, ad infinitum, since this was that peculiar nightmare of a case in which both sides were in a position to go on covering all their costs simply by printing fresh money. ♦



To pay his legal fees, Boggs plans to use bills that will feature his own portrait.

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE WANDERER

Decades of Dylanology have missed the point—the music is the message.

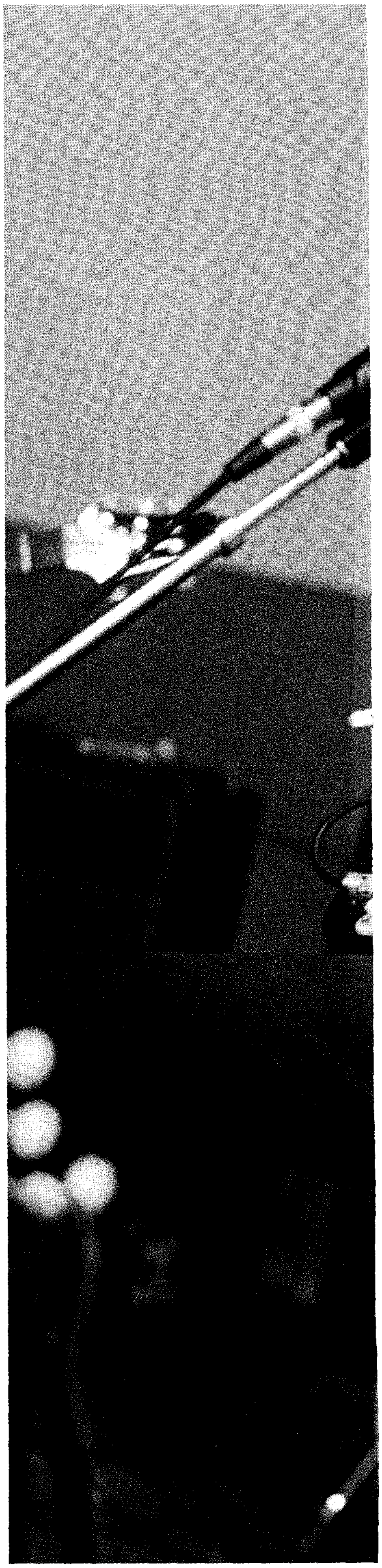
BY ALEX ROSS

If you look through what has been written about Bob Dylan in the past thirty-odd years, you notice a desire for him to die off, so that his younger self can assume its mythic place. When he had his famous motorcycle mishap in 1966, at the age of twenty-five, it was presumed that his career had come to a sudden end: rumors had him killed or maimed, like James Dean or Montgomery Clift. In 1978, after the fiasco of "Renaldo & Clara," Dylan's four-hour art film, Mark Jacobson wrote in the *Village Voice*, "I wish Bob Dylan died. Then Channel 5 would piece together an instant documentary on his life and times. . . . Just the immutable facts." James Wolcott was unhappy to find him still kicking in 1985: "My God, he sounds as if he could go on grinding out this crap *forever*." When Dylan was hospitalized with a chest infection in 1997, newspapers ran practice obituaries: "Bob Dylan, who helped transform pop music more than thirty years ago when he electrified folk music . . ."; "Bob Dylan, whose bittersweet love songs and politically tinged folk anthems made him an emblem of the nineteen-sixties counterculture . . ."

PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON. I'm at the 1998 Puyallup Fair, in this agricultural suburb of Tacoma, and among the attractions are Elmer, a twenty-four-hundred-pound Red Holstein cow; a miniature haunted house ingeniously mounted on the back of a truck; bingo with Hoovers for prizes; and Bob Dylan. He is announced, with cheesy gusto, as "Columbia recording artist Bob Dylan!" He saunters out from shadows in the back of the stage, indistinguishable at first from the four other band members. He is dressed in a gray-and-black Nashville getup and looks like a lopsided owl. As the show gets under way, he tries a few cautious strutting and dancing moves, Chuck Berry style. He plays five numbers from his most recent album, "Time Out of Mind"; several hits, among them "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" and "Masters of War"; and something more unexpected from his five-hundred-song back catalogue—"You Ain't Goin' Nowhere." He ends with "Forever Young." The crowd goes wild.

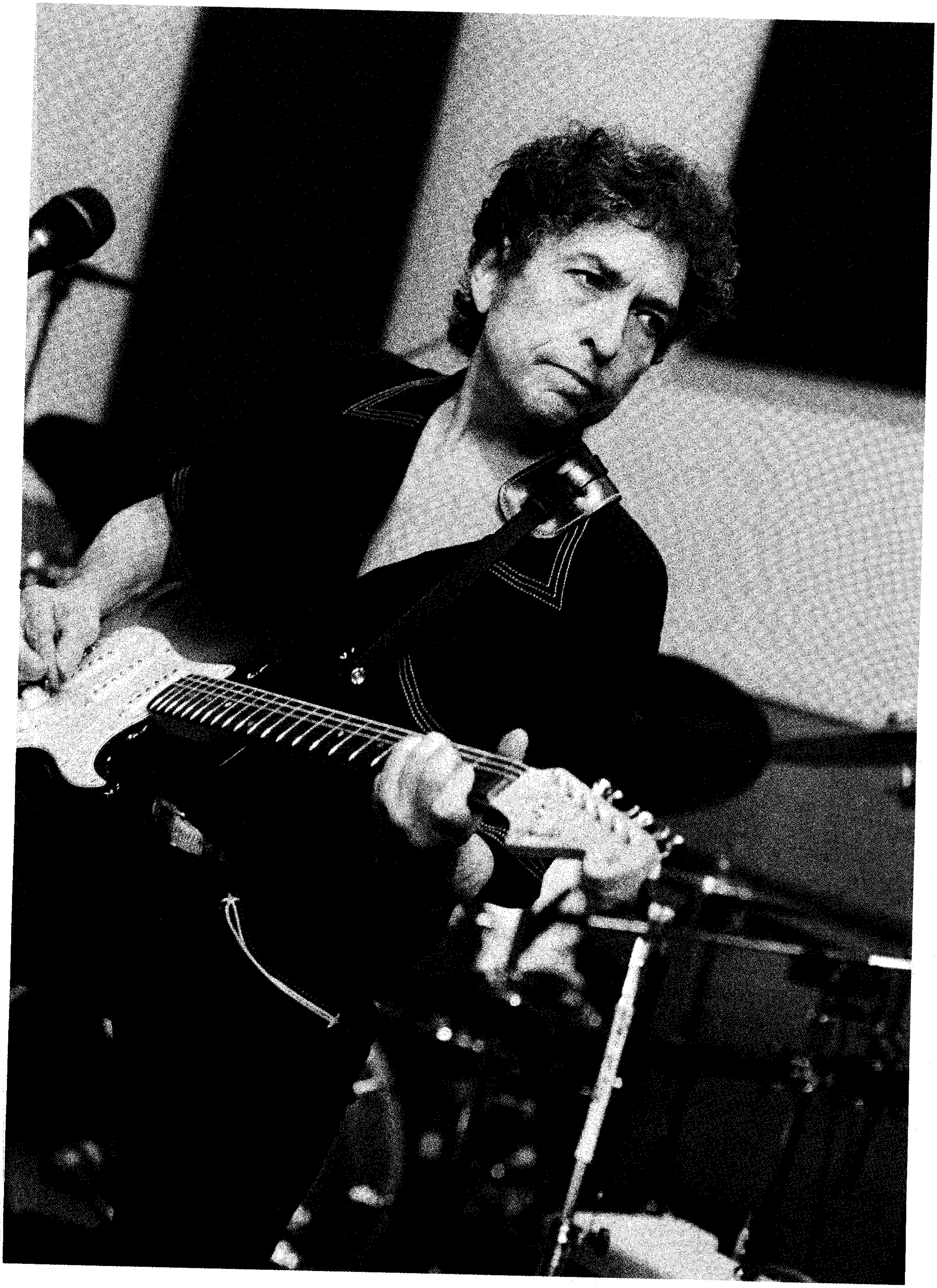
When I told people that I was going to follow Dylan on the road, I got various bemused reactions. Some were surprised to hear that he still played in public at all. It's easier, perhaps, to picture him in "Citizen Kane"-like seclusion, glowering at the Bible and listening to the collected works of Blind Willie McTell. Maybe, but he also plays more than a hundred shows a year. Last year, he appeared in Buenos Aires, Nuremberg, Brisbane, Saskatoon, and Bristol, Tennessee, among other places. Starting in June, he will pass through thirty American cities, with Paul Simon in tow. As of this writing, he is in Slovenia.

What are these shows like? How are they different from the classic-rock nostalgia acts that clutter summer stages? I've been to ten Dylan concerts in the past year, including a six-day, six-show stretch that took three thousand miles off the life of a rental car. The crowds were more diverse than I'd expected: young urban record-collector types, grizzled weirdos, well-dressed ex-hippies, and enthusiastic kids in Grateful Dead T-shirts. Deadheads are a big part of Dylan's audience, and they created odd scenes as they descended on each venue: in Reno, they streamed in psychedelic lines through the Hilton casino. I asked some of the younger fans how they had become interested in Dylan, since he is not exactly omnipresent on MTV. Most



PHOTOGRAPH BY GILLES PERESS

Dylan in January, 1999: Creatively tinkering with the rock era's greatest songbook.



had discovered him, they said, while browsing through their parents' old LPs. One kid, who had been listening to a 45-r.p.m. single of "Hurricane," thought that he should come and check out the man behind it. The younger fans didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that Dylan was three times their age. A literate teen-ager asked me, "Do you have to be from Elizabethan England to appreciate Shakespeare?"

Before each show, for some reason, minor-key sonatas and concertos by Mozart were played over the P.A. system. Male Dylanologists explained lyrics to their girlfriends. "Every Dylan song contains *eight questions*," I heard one saying. A crowd of drunks who sat in front of me at a show in Minnesota seemed to have the Dylan songbook pretty well memorized. The rowdiest of them was shouting out first lines of the songs at the top of his voice, and once, in his excitement, he crashed into the hard plastic seats. He got up again, blood dripping down his chin, and bellowed in my face, "*Once upon a time you dressed so fine! God said to Abraham, 'Kill me a son!'* " Other fans took a cooler view. Before a show in Portland, I chatted with a level-headed twenty-something guy who plays in a progressive funk group. "Last time I saw him, in '90, it was *brutal*," he told me. "I hope he doesn't fuck up the songs again. I hear he's better. Even when he's awful, he's sort of great—he's never just *mediocre*." In Dylan's vicinity, I noticed, everyone italicizes.

Many people had told me that Dylan makes a mess of the songs. He does change them, and fans who come to hear live-action reënactments of the favorite records of their youth tend to be disappointed. Dylan sometimes writes new melodies for old songs and he sometimes transposes one set of lyrics into the tune of another. He writes a little more every night; I kept hearing fresh bluesy bits of tunes in "Tangled Up in Blue," which was at the center of every set. As a performer, he is erratic: his voice sometimes thins into a bleat, he occasionally drops or jumbles lines, and every so often his guitar yelps wrong notes. But he has a saturnine ease onstage; even from a hundred feet away, his squinting stare can give you a start. And he is musically in control. The band's pacing of each song—the unpredictable scampering to and fro over a loosely felt beat, the watch-and-wait atmosphere, the sudden knowing emphasis on one line or one note—is much the same as when Dylan plays solo. You can hear him thinking through the music bar by bar: he has a way of tracing out his chords in winding one-note patterns and bringing them alive. And the basic structures of the songs are unshakable. There is never a wrong chord.

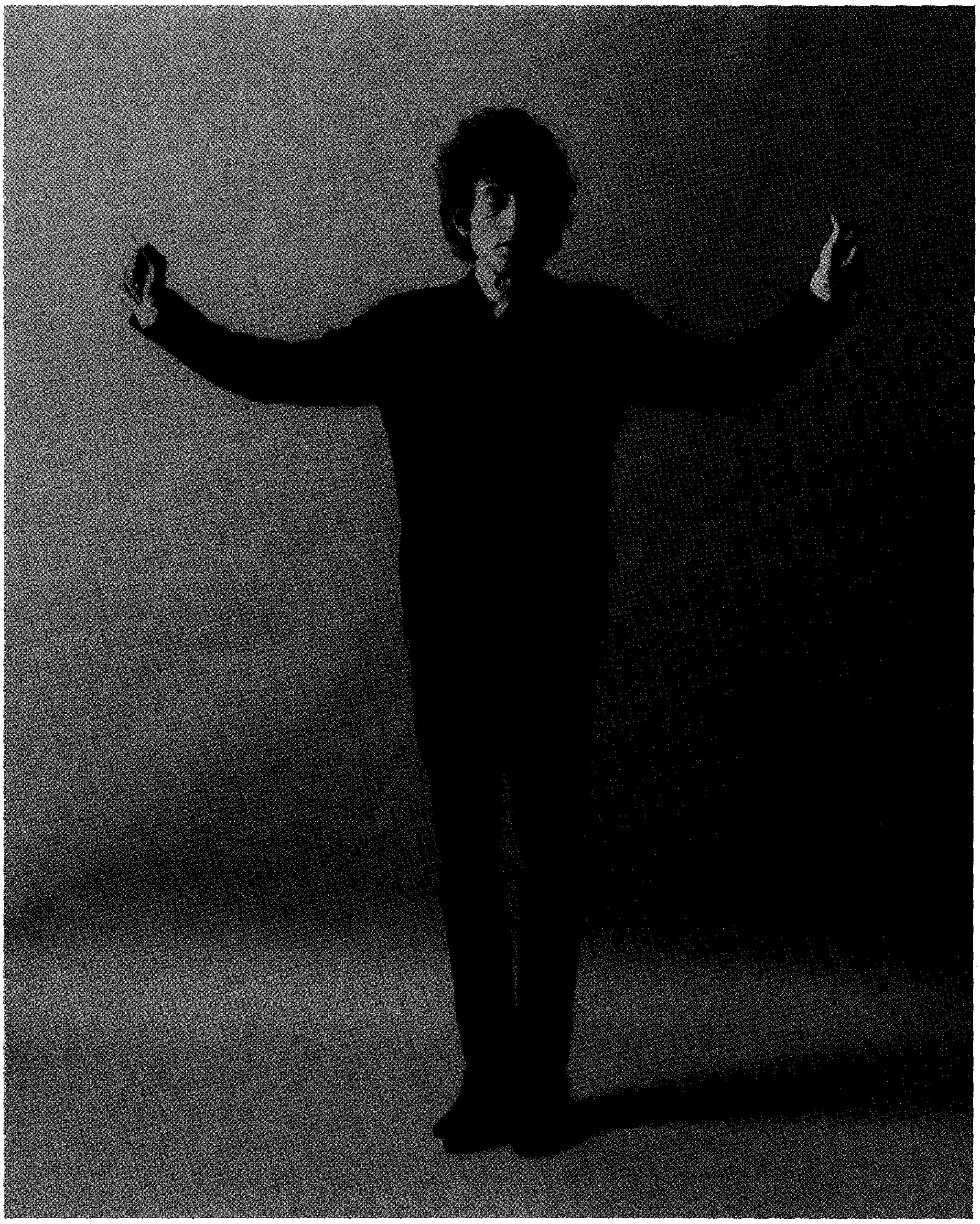
IN the verbal jungle of rock criticism, Dylan is seldom talked about in musical terms. His work is analyzed instead as poetry, punditry, or mystification. A new book, entitled "The Bob Dylan Companion," goes so far as to call him "one of the least talented singers and guitarists around." But to hear Dylan live is to realize that he *is* a musician—of an eccentric and mesmerizing kind. It's hard to pin down what he does: he is a composer and a performer at once, and his shows cause his songs to mutate, so that no definitive or ideal version exists. Dylan's legacy will be the sum of thousands of performances, over many decades. The achievement is so large and so confusing that the impulse to ignore all that came after his near death and disappearance in 1966 is understandable. It's simpler that way—and cheaper. You need only seven disks, instead of forty-three. But Columbia Records, after years of putting out bungled live recordings, is finally beginning to illustrate, in its Bootleg Series, the entire sweep of Dylan's performing career. Columbia is now preparing an expanded version of his best-written album, "Blood on the Tracks," which should enable fans to hear the almost unbearably sad early versions of "Tangled Up in Blue" and "Idiot Wind." There are other wonders from the archives waiting to be revealed.

Don DeLillo, in his novel "Great Jones Street," imagined a Dylanesque rock star and said of him, "Even if half-mad he is absorbed into the public's total madness; even if fully rational, a bureaucrat in hell, a secret genius of survival, he is sure to be destroyed by the public's contempt for survivors." But Dylan has survived without becoming a "survivor"—a professional star acting out the role of himself. He has a curious, sub-rosa place in pop culture, seeming to be everywhere and nowhere at once. He is historical enough to be the subject of university seminars, yet he wanders the land playing to beery crowds. The Dylan that people thought they knew—"the voice of a generation"—is going away. So I went searching for whatever might be taking its place. I went to the shows; I listened to the records; I patronized dusty Greenwich Village stores in search of bootlegs; I sought out the Dylanologists who are arguing over his legacy in print. Strange to say, Dylan himself may explain his songs best, just by singing them.

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA. The crowd is dominated by ex- and neo-hippies from Berkeley, twenty miles to the west. Dylan threatens to dampen their enthusiasm by opening with "Gotta Serve Somebody," the snarling gospel single with which he had horrified the counterculture in 1979. But he works his way back to the sing-along anthem "Blowin' in the Wind." I was sitting near a teen-age girl who had first heard Dylan in a class on the sixties and was there with her teacher.

Dylan's looming presence in the politics and culture of the sixties is for many a point in his favor: he wrote songs that "mattered," he "made a difference." For others, particularly for those of us who grew up in later, less delirious decades, the sixties connection is a stumbling block. Until a few years ago, when I started listening to Dylan in earnest, I had mentally shelved him as the archetypal radical leftover, reeking of politics and marijuana. I'd read a story that went something like this. He was born in Minnesota. He went to Greenwich Village. He wrote protest songs. He stopped writing protest songs. He took drugs, "went electric." He was booed. He fell off his motorcycle. He disappeared into a basement. He reappeared and sang country. He got divorced. He converted to Christianity. He converted back to something else. He croaked somewhere behind Stevie Wonder in "We Are the World." And so on. If you're not in the right age group, the collected bulletins of Dylan's progress read like alumni notes from a school you didn't attend.

The challenge for anyone who thinks Dylan is more than a life-style trendsetter is to define those qualities that have outlasted his boisterous term as the voice of a generation. So far, the informal discipline of Dylanology—founded around 1970, by a creep named A. J.



Weberman as he fished through Dylan's trash on MacDougal Street—has reached no consensus on the matter. At the moment, there are about a half-dozen luminaries in the field. Greil Marcus, the most formidable of rock critics, connects Dylan with a home-grown, folk-and-blues surrealism that he calls "the old, weird America." Paul Williams, who founded the rock magazine *Crawdaddy!* in the sixties, celebrates Dylan as a tireless, generous performer who rewrites his songs at every show. The Dylan biographer Clinton Heylin lavishes attention on the gospel period and the apocalyptic rants that followed in the eighties. Christopher Ricks, a renowned scholar of Milton, Tennyson, Eliot, and Beckett at Boston University, supplies a formalist reading—of Dylan as a pure poet, who thrives on word choice, rhythm, and structured rhyme. In the same spirit, Gordon Ball, a professor of English at the Virginia Military Institute, has nominated Dylan for a Nobel Prize in Literature.

Below the main authorities are the amateur Dylanologists: enthusiasts, cranks, editors of fanzines, caretakers of gigantically detailed Internet sites. There is no end to their productions. "The Cracked Bells," for instance, is an unreadable book-length guide to Dylan's unreadable book-length poem "Tarantula." The author, Robin Witting, writes, "'Tarantula' has six main themes: America, Viet Nam, Aretha, Mexico, Maria, and—the great panacea—Music." I didn't find much about music, but I enjoyed a note on geraniums: "Do geraniums stand for coolness? Insouciance? Moreover, the odour of death?" Aidan Day's "Jokerman," a book on Dylan's lyrics, analyzes some lines from "Visions of Johanna," in "Blonde on Blonde," and finds in them "a reduction of form to primal elements as—in an image that itself displaces Marcel Duchamp's rendering of the Mona Lisa in the painting 'LHOOQ' (1919)—even gender difference becomes confused and

JERRY SCHATZBERG/STALEY WISE GALLERY

Dylan at the height of his sixties fame: He won plaudits from Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, and Philip Larkin.

human contour and feature are erased." The text in question is "See the primitive wallflower freeze / When the jelly-faced women all sneeze / Hear the one with the mustache say, 'Jeeze / I can't find my knees.' "

Despite everything that has been written about Dylan, not a great deal is known about him for certain. Heylin's chronology of Dylan's life, for example, is an archly self-cancelling document, in that every piece of information points to a larger lack of information. Here are three consecutive entries for the year 1974:

> *Late April.* Dylan attends a concert by Buffy St. Marie at the Bottom Line in New York. He is so impressed he returns the following two nights, and tells her he'd like to record her composition, "Until It's Time for You to Go."
>
> *May 6.* Dylan runs into Phil Ochs in front of the Chelsea Hotel and they decide to go for a drink together.
>
> *May 7.* Dylan visits Ochs at his apartment and agrees to perform at the "Friends of Chile" benefit.

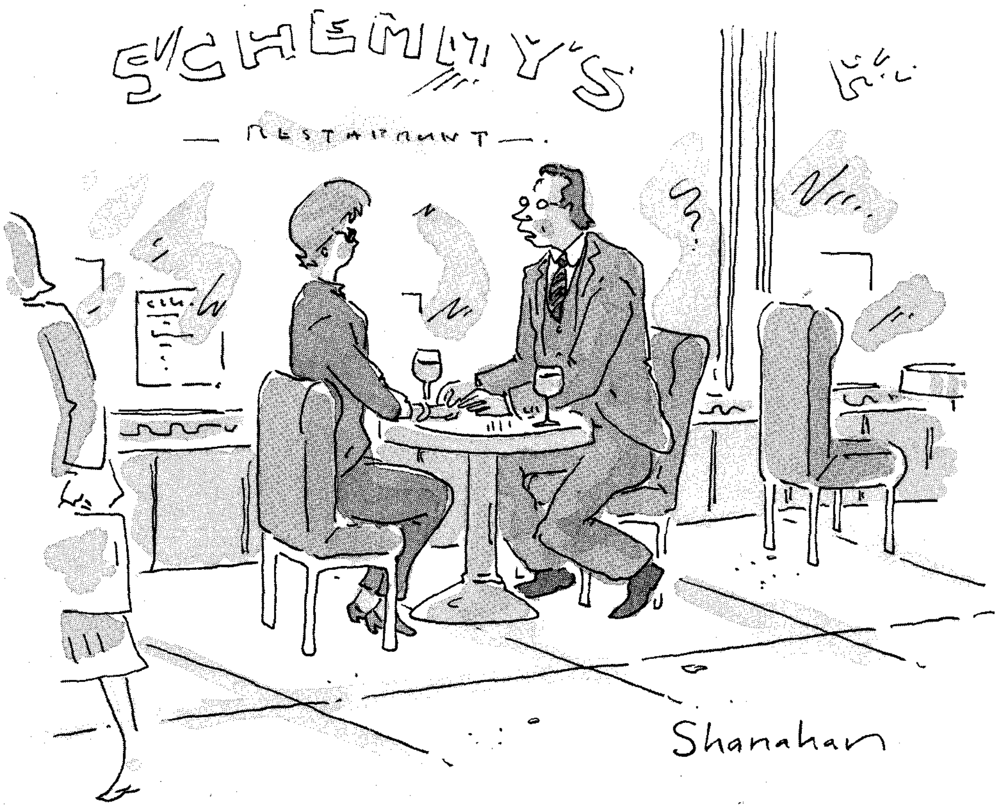
What happened during the rest of the first week of May? Where *was* he going when he ran into Phil Ochs? Dylan's life story sometimes feels as if it has been pieced together from centuries-old manuscripts that were charred in a monastery fire. "Between January and June 1972 there is no evidence that he was in New York at all," Heylin writes in his attempt at a full-scale biography, "Dylan: Behind the Shades." Heylin, a skeptical Englishman who is known for a history of American punk, is at least willing to admit what he doesn't know, and his book is the most readable and reliable of four biographies.

THE accumulated files of Dylanology, despite their gaps, give a rough sense of the personality behind the enigma. A thumbnail sketch from a classic 1967 essay by Ellen Willis holds up well: "Friends describe [him] as shy and defensive, hyped up, careless of his health, a bit scared by fame, unmaterialistic but shrewd about money, a professional absorbed in his craft." Stubborn persistence is his main characteristic: although he has often vanished in a funk brought on by the vagaries of his career, he never fails to trudge back with some new twist on his obsessions. He is at odds with the modern world in many ways. "There's enough of everything," he said in a 1991 interview. "There was too much of it with *electricity*, maybe, some people said that. Some people said the *light bulb* was going too far." His eccentricity has an everyday quality—he's the weird neighbor you can never figure out. I heard an excellent Dylan anecdote from a friend who played on a Little League team with Dylan's kids in the late seventies, during the singer's gospel period. When a dog ran onto the field, my friend yelled, "Get that goddam dog off the field!" A familiar voice rasped from the parents' bench, "Ahhh, that's a *what* kind of a dog?"

Dylan's rise was fabulously odd. He was famous before he was twenty-one. World fame—not just celebrity but intellectual fame, with plaudits from Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, and Philip Larkin—came to him by the age of twenty-five. The speed of his ascent required some luck, but it was mostly a function of his energy. He skipped heedlessly from one genre to another: folk, blues, country, spirituals. He played at being an activist, but his sharpest polemics, such as "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," were the character-driven ones. His early vocal style incorporated pieces of Woody Guthrie, Mississippi John Hurt, Hank Williams, and, not to be forgotten, Johnnie Ray, the flaky fifties crooner who smacked his consonants with unnerving ferocity. In the early sixties, Dylan sought to play rock and roll and electric blues alongside his acoustic material: he had hammered the piano, Little Richard style, in high school, and he longed to resume that kind of noisemaking. He originally planned to have his second album, "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan," be part electric and part acoustic, like the later "Bringing It All Back Home." He signalled his intentions by covering "That's All Right, Mama," Elvis's début single, at his first electric session, in October, 1962. He was trying frantically to say everything at once.

But he soon discovered that you can be famous for only one thing at a time. The record business and the music press wanted a narrower genius. The electric songs from 1962 didn't fit the image that Columbia wanted to create—Dylan as folk prophet. He was gaining notoriety chiefly for his civil-rights and anti-war material, and Columbia advertised him accordingly:

> Bob Dylan has walked down many roads. For most of his 22 years he "rode freight trains for kicks and got beat up for laughs, cut grass for

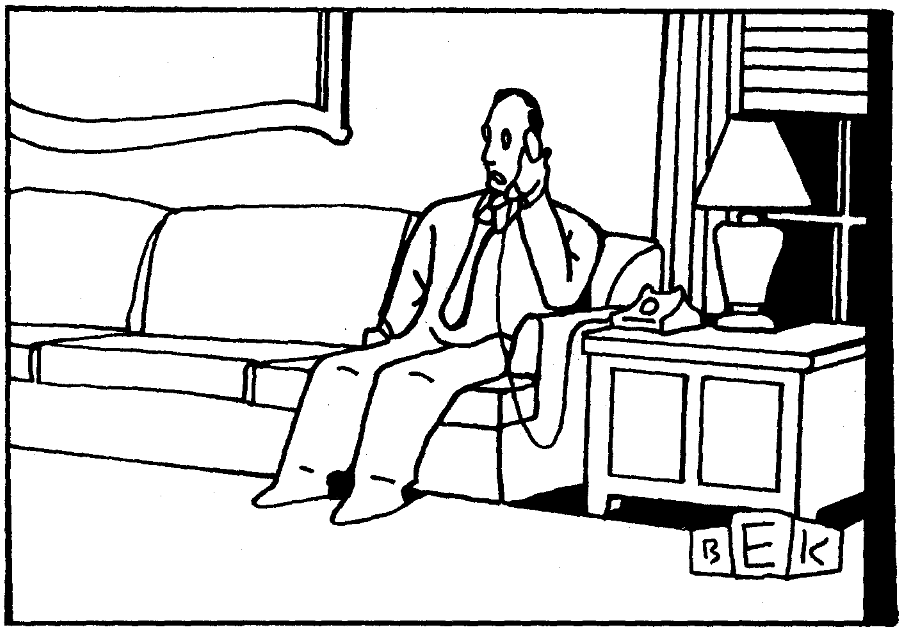


"Give me one more chance, Rachel. I'll go straight, and quit my lawyerin' ways."

quarters and sang for dimes." ... Bob does what a true folk singer is supposed to do—sing about the important ideas and events of the times.... His new best-selling album (the first was "Bob Dylan") is "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan." It features ten of Bob's own compositions, including the sensational hit, "Blowin' in the Wind." Also, songs on subjects ranging from love ("Girl from the North Country") to atomic fall-out ("A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall"). Hear it and you'll know why Bob Dylan is the voice of the times.

This ingenious ad copy, complete with Dylan's tall tales about his past, infiltrated the press coverage. Dylan soon became annoyed at the generalizations, and found himself fighting his own publicity; he denied, for example, that "Hard Rain" depicted a nuclear winter. Even so, he played along with the spirit of the marketing: he later claimed that the song had been a general reaction to the dread of the nuclear age, and to the atmosphere of the Cuban missile crisis in particular. In a widely quoted statement, he said, "I wrote that when I didn't figure I'd have enough time left in life." "Hard Rain" had actually been written at least a month before the Cuban crisis began. Before long, he learned not to talk about his songs at all.

"Hard Rain" was a breakthrough in Dylan's writing, but for a different reason. It's a small epic, lasting seven minutes, and yet it lacks the sort of blow-by-blow storytelling that sustains the picaresque ballads of folk literature. How does Dylan keep us interested? One way is through repetition; another is through changes that occur between the first repetition and the last. Almost all of Dylan's songs have a structure of verse-refrain, verse-refrain, and the refrain is almost always a simple-seeming, folkish phrase that tolls like a bell: "Tangled up in blue," "You gotta serve somebody," "It's not dark yet, but it's getting there," "It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall." In "Hard Rain," the first lines—"Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son? And where have you been, my darling young one?"—are a nod to the old ballad "Lord Randal," which begins, "Oh, where ha' you been, Lord Randal, my son? Oh, where ha' you been, my handsome young man?" Dylan breaks the symmetrical call-and-response pattern of the original: his blue-eyed son answers not with two lines but with five. The images—"twelve misty mountains," "six crooked highways," and so forth—carry the flavor of the Book of Revelation, with its insistence on exact numbers of bizarre objects ("I saw seven golden candlesticks"). The song hangs on a musical trick of suspension: E and A chords seesaw hypnotically as the number of answering phrases increases from five to seven and eventually to twelve. In the chorus—"And it's a hard, and it's a hard..."—Dylan grasps for and finally gets the resolution, which in each verse has moved a little farther out of reach. Coming down the mountain of the song, he starts to sound like a prophet.



"You know, Einstein never watched any great television until after he was forty."

• •

Many myths of Dylan's sixties career don't hold up under the evidence gathered in Heylin's books and other Dylanological tomes. Dylan's songwriting is said to have been transformed by a plunge into the drug culture, but he had been using drugs on and off since his Minnesota days. He was said to have been inspired by the Beatles to "go electric," but he had sketched out his folk-rock sound as early as 1962. The first electric shows reportedly provoked universal booing, but on the tape of his famous appearance at the Newport Folk Festival, in 1965, it's difficult to hear boos amid the applause. D. A. Pennebaker, who filmed Dylan's 1966 tour with the Hawks, doesn't recall many confrontations; he says that if there were such incidents the ringleader didn't appear to be greatly bothered by them. "Dylan was having the best time of his life," he said at a recent symposium on Dylan's tour movie "Eat the Document," at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York. "He was like a cricket jumping around onstage."

Greil Marcus describes the 1965-66 tours differently—as a war against dark reactionary forces. He quotes Al Kooper's reason for not wanting to follow the tour into Texas: "Look what they did to J.F.K. down there." Marcus finds special significance in an exchange that took place between Dylan and the audience in Manchester, England, in May, 1966. In his book "Invisible Republic," Marcus renders this moment as Dylan's ultimate, shattering encounter with the collected forces of Them:

> As if he had been waiting . . . a person rises and shouts what he has been silently rehearsing to himself all night. As over and over he has imagined himself doing, he stands up, and stops time. He stops the show:
>
> "JUDAS!"
>
> Dylan stiffens against the flinch of his own body. "I don't believe you," Dylan says, and the contempt in his voice is absolute. As one listens it turns the echo of the shouter's curse sour, you begin to hear the falseness in it, that loving rehearsal—and yet that same echo has already driven Dylan back. "YOU'RE A *LIAR!*" he screams hysterically.

When Columbia finally released a CD of the show, last year—it had circulated for thirty years on bootlegs—

"It's museum-store quality."

neophytes may have skipped to the end in order to hear the renowned "Judas!" dialogue. They were probably disappointed. What you hear first is an ordinary lull, during which Dylan tunes his guitar. When the shout of "Judas!" comes, the crowd variously laughs, groans, and applauds. The voice from the back yammers unintelligibly, and others join in. When Dylan responds, he is not screaming hysterically, or, indeed, screaming at all. It's as if he couldn't understand what the lads in the back were hollering and therefore supplied the kind of all-purpose non sequitur that he liked to dish out at press conferences.

Marcus implies that there was a conspiracy among folk purists to silence Dylan: the heckler is said to have been "well informed as to the precise order in which Dylan played his songs." But C. P. Lee, a minor Dylanologist, recently took the trouble to write an entire book about the Manchester show, and after its publication a great discovery was made: the "Judas" shouter was no Pete Seeger-like elder statesman of folk but a confused twenty-year-old university student named Keith Butler. "It was not a premeditated thing," Butler told the English press after coming forward. (He now works at a bank in Toronto.) "I was swept along by the mood, which was chaotic. I was feeling disappointed and angry." In other words, two disparate youth cultures—rock-and-rollers and folkies—were jockeying for control of a spokesman who was declining to give a clear message to either of them. Thirteen years later, after all, the rock generation in turn would feel betrayed by Dylan's gospel songs, and shouts of "Judas!" and "Traitor!" would be thrown at him again. The gospel shows were sometimes no less electrifying than the 1966 concerts, but they happened not to fit the story of a generation.

As Dylan's tour passed through California, I went to see Marcus, who lives in the Berkeley hills. "The funny thing is that I'm not a *Dylan person*," he told me. "Many years went by when I didn't care about him at all." For Marcus, as for many of the original followers, Dylan disappeared in the seventies and eighties, except for brief comebacks. Marcus's *Rolling Stone* review of the 1970 "Self-Portrait" began with the words "What is this shit?" Only when Dylan started recording folk and blues covers in the nineties was he restored to Marcus's favor. In "Invisible Republic," which deals with Dylan's "Basement Tapes," Marcus makes compelling side trips into older American music—the shrapnel-voiced Dock Boggs and other comical-sinister back-country singers who had been collected in Harry Smith's celebrated 1952 "Anthology of American Folk Music." In the eighties, the critic asked to hear "more Dock Boggs" in the singer's aging voice, and that alchemy more or less happened. Marcus seems to have got inside his subject's mind, and Dylan indicated as much by providing a blurb for the paperback of "Invisible Republic."

But there has to be something missing in a reading of Dylan that skips twenty years of his career. What if, as some think, he reached his peak not with the put-ons and put-downs of the sixties but with the chaotic love songs of the seventies? And what if, as Clinton Heylin suggests, he went even further in the eighties, when he fused the personal and the apocalyptic—"Lovesick Blues" with the Book of Revelation? Lester Bangs wrote in 1981, "If people are going to dismiss or at best laugh at Dylan now as automatically as they once genuflected, then nobody is going to know if he ever makes a good album again. They're not listening now, which just might mean they weren't really listening then either."

I WAS ready to give up on Dylanology until I had tea with Christopher Ricks, a legendary close reader of canonical English poetry. We met in his decorous sitting room, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Although he speaks in the clipped tones of a modern English don, he has a way of plunging into the passive-aggressive dynamic of Dylan's emotions. "The words constitute an *axis*," he said to me. "They do not point in one direction." Dylan says one thing and may mean the opposite. This may seem like irony, but I don't think it is; irony, strictly speaking, requires a reversal of meaning. Dylan can obtain ambiguity simply by repeating a phrase. "Think of 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right,'" Ricks continued, intoning the refrain. "How many times can you tell somebody not to think twice? You can say

'It's all right' over and over. That's comforting—but not 'Don't think twice.' I'd start to think."

I was reminded of some similarly hazy lines from "Meet Me in the Morning," circa 1974:

> Look at the sun, sinking like a ship
> Look at the sun, sinking like a ship
> Ain't that just like my heart, babe
> When you kissed my lips?

This tangled metaphor—the sun like a ship, the heart like the sun—can spin in any direction. Is the heart glowing like a sunset? Or is it sinking out of sight? And is the ship going over the horizon, or is it just sinking? The less happy implication is that it is in the nature of ships, and of hearts, to sink.

When others have tried to read Dylan line by line, they have usually chased after outside references. (They will say, "He mentioned the Bomb! T. S. Eliot! Joan Baez!") Talking about "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," Ricks begins not with the case of William Zantzinger—a wealthy young farmer who caused the death of a black barmaid at a Baltimore ball and got off with a six-month sentence—but with the rhythm of Zantzinger's name: a strong beat followed by a weak one. The whole song, he says, is dominated by that loping, tapering rhythm of the name, from which Dylan removed an unsingable "t":

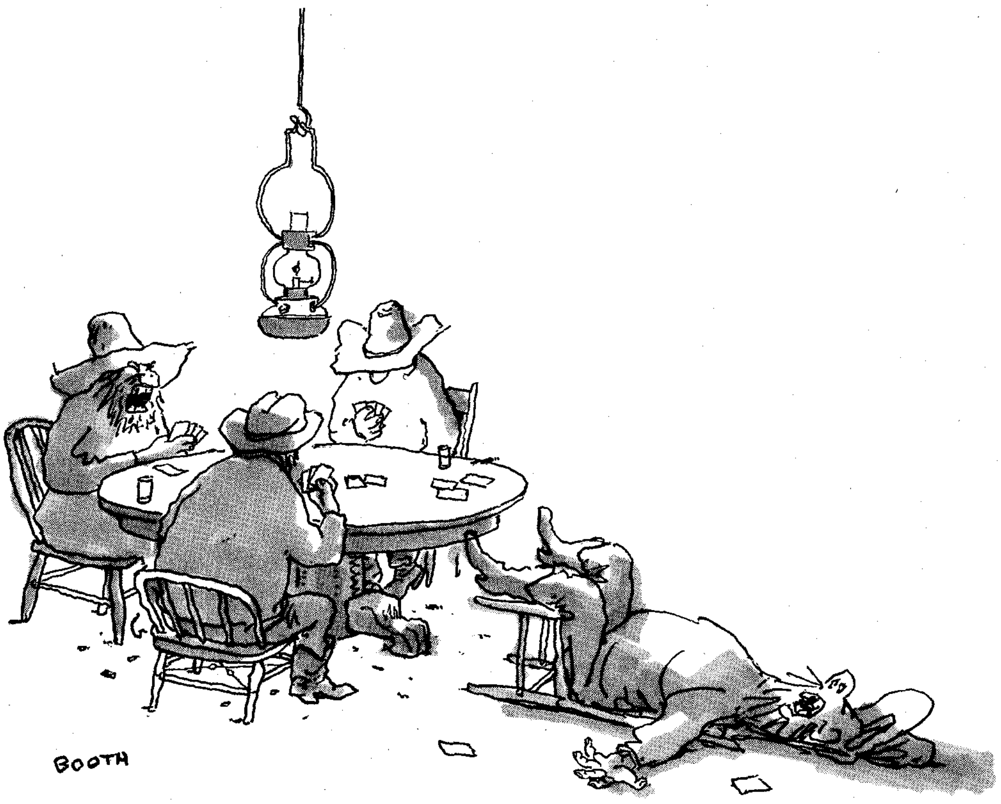
> William Zanzinger killed poor
>   Hattie Carroll
> With a cane that he twirled
>   round his diamond ring
>   finger
> At a Baltimore hotel society
>   gathering.

It produces a feeling of helplessness, the way each line ends in a weak beat, and this seems to be the point: cry all you want, the gentle suffer. The dominant emotion is not political rage but a quavering sympathy for Hattie Carroll, whose race is never mentioned. This song certainly doesn't raise hopes for judicial reform, and it has not gone out of date, like the cardboard protest anthems of its era. (In 1991, William Zantzinger was found to have collected rent from tenants who had been living in extreme squalor in houses that he didn't own. This time, the judge handed down sternly an eighteen-month sentence, in a work-release program.)

"Now's the time for your tears," Dylan sings at the end. Ricks said to me, "He doesn't underscore it—say, 'Now *is* the time.' He doesn't exhort you. Maybe you should have cried before, when Hattie died." (Paul Williams thinks the refrain for the preceding verses, "Now ain't the time for your tears," is actually sarcastic, and that Dylan is saying, "You can't cry because you're a leftist do-gooder who cares only about the legal ramifications." Another axial moment.) Ricks went on to criticize some of Dylan's more recent performances of "Hattie Carroll," in which he pushes the last line a little: "He doesn't let it speak for itself. He sentimentalizes it, I'm afraid." Here I began to wonder whether the close reader had zoomed in too close. Ricks seemed to be fetishizing the details of a recording, and denying the musician license to expand his songs in performance. I had just seen Dylan sing "Hattie Carroll," in Portland, and it was the best performance that I heard him give. He turned the accompaniment into a steady, sad acoustic waltz, and he played a lullabylike solo at the center. You were reminded that the "hotel society gathering" was a Spinsters' Ball, whose dance went on before, during, and after the fatal attack on Hattie Carroll. This was an eerie twist on the meaning of the song, and not a sentimental one.

Still, Ricks's writing on Dylan is the best there is. Unlike most rock critics—forty-year-olds talking to ten-year-olds, Dylan has called them—he writes for adults. But he has been slow to publish. He has produced only one major essay, for *The Threepenny Review*, and he has been mulling for years over a book-length Dylan study. "I don't teach Dylan," he told me. "It's just an *obsession*." And he writes, half jokingly, "I need to show that I'm not besotted with the man." Ricks, like Marcus, might not want to be called a "Dylan person." Academics who write about Dylan are labelled eccentrics at best. Academe, which is usually so eager to splash around in the pop-culture pool, rejects Dylan because he's an old white male.

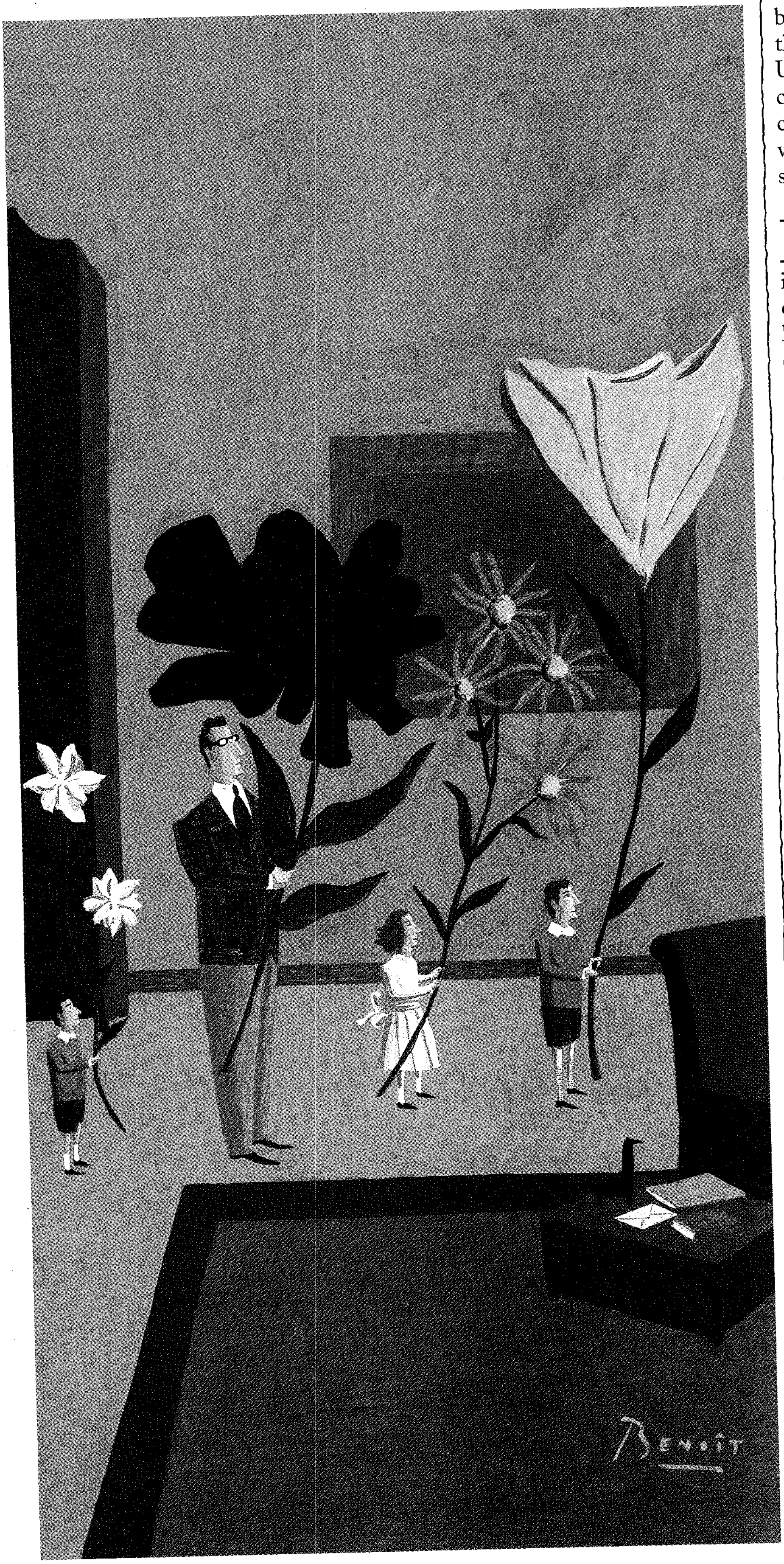
Dylan himself declines the highbrow treatment—though you get the sense that he wouldn't mind picking up a Nobel Prize. Even in the sixties, he said of those who called him a poet, "Genius is a terrible word, a word they think will make me like them." He seems to prefer an audience of teen-age Deadheads in a basketball arena. He may occasionally surprise the kids with moody master-



"One thing about Earl—Earl knows when to fold."

SKETCHBOOK BY BENOÎT VAN INNIS

TO MOM, WITH LOVE



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pieces, like "Hattie Carroll," "Visions of Johanna," and "Not Dark Yet," or he may teach them a Stanley Brothers bluegrass hymn, but more often he gets them to jump up and down to "Tangled Up in Blue." This way, he packs in the crowds, and he also makes sure that he cannot be pinned down. Every night, whether he is in good or bad form, he says, in effect, "Think again."

DULUTH, MINNESOTA. Dylan was born here, in 1941, before moving with his family to the iron-ore town of Hibbing. He has never played Duluth before. The city is moderately excited by his return. He is front-page news for two days running in the Duluth *News-Tribune*. Storefronts downtown are adorned with "Welcome Home, Bob" signs. Duluthans are hoping that he will have something to say to the city; he did, after all, mention Duluth when he accepted the 1998 Grammy for Album of the Year. ("WOW! DYLAN SAID 'DULUTH'!" ran a local headline.) At the show, a fan tosses onto the stage a paper airplane on which he has written, "Please speak." It lands upside down. Dylan does not speak. The silence is a little chilly; a few words would have made the audience ecstatic. Dylan's defense for this kind of criticism is that public speeches are a no-win situation. If he speaks a few words, people say he hasn't said enough. If he speaks at length, people think he's lost his mind. In the end, Minnesotans don't seem too miffed by the episode. I ask one local resident the following day whether he's disappointed. "A little," he replies. "But in the paper it said he smiled a lot."

Discussions of Dylan often boil down to that: "Please speak. Tell us what it means." But does he need to? He had already given something away, during the ritual acoustic performance of "Tangled Up in Blue." This dense tale, which may be about two couples, one couple, or one couple plus an interloper, seems autobiographical; it's easy to guess what Dylan might be thinking about when he sings, "When it all came crashing down, I became withdrawn / The only thing I knew how to do was keep on keeping on / Like a bird that flew . . ." See any number of ridiculous spectacles in Dylan's life. But the lines that he shouted out with extra emphasis came at the end:

> Me, I'm still on the road, heading for another joint

> We always did feel the same, we just saw
> it from a different point
> Of view
> Tangled up in blue.

Suddenly, the romance in question seemed to be the long, stormy one between Dylan and his audience. There's a Ricksian detail that locates this shift in meaning: used as a rhyme, "point" cuts the phrase "point of view" in half, so that the "you" and the "I" are literally looking from different points in space—Dylan being over there and the rest of us over here. And what is the "it" that we're seeing? The thing that comes between him and us—the music. Still, he says, "We always did feel the same." Interpretations are different, feelings are the same. That's a major concession from a man who seems so distant.

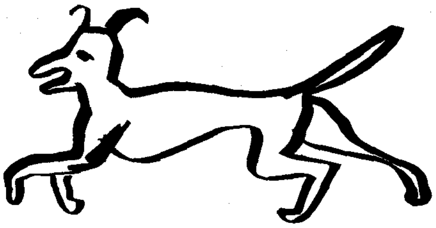
Why, night after night, did "Tangled Up in Blue" prove to be the song that brought the audience to life, as if Dylan had dived in and given everyone a hug? You could argue that those generous closing lines did the trick. But from the outset Dylan established an intimacy with the audience: the music did the emotional work for him. The current version of "Tangled Up in Blue" begins, like the original one on "Blood on the Tracks," with chiming major chords, but the onstage Dylan soon slips into a different scale—into the blues. Dismantling and rebuilding his own song, piece by piece, he bends notes down, inverts the melody, spreads out the pitches of the chords, leans on a single note while the chords change around it, stresses the offbeats, lays triple rhythms on double ones. As the rest of the band holds on to straitlaced harmony and a one-two beat, the song tenses up: opposing scales meet in bittersweet clashes, opposing pulses overlap in a danceable bounce. At some point, the classic radio staple becomes a new animal. By the end, Dylan may be speaking right at you, but you're probably too caught up in the music to notice.

As I went through my collection of Dylan records and tapes, I realized that in many cases I was only half listening to the lyrics—that the music was giving the words their poetic aura. Often, Dylan's strongest verbal images occur toward the beginning of a song, and it falls to his musical sense to make something of the rest. In "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands," the eleven-minute ballad that closes "Blonde on Blonde," Dylan fashions some majestic metaphors to capture the object of his affection—"your eyes like smoke and your prayers like rhymes"—and then, in the second-to-last verse, he clouds over: "They wished you'd accepted the blame for the farm." What farm? What happened to it? Why would she be to blame for it? "Phony false alarm" is the rhyme in the next line, and it doesn't clear things up. The refrain makes another appearance—"My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums / Should I leave them by your gate, / Or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?"—and by this time you ought to be losing patience with it. What are "warehouse eyes," and how can one leave them? Dylanologists beat their heads against such questions. But the music makes you forget them. The melody of the refrain—a rising and descending scale, as in "Danny Boy"—is grand to begin with, but in the fifth verse Dylan makes it grander. As the band keeps playing the scale, he skates back up to the top D with each syllable. He sings on one note as the rest of the harmony moves around him: it's as if he's surveying the music from a summit. This is a trick as old as music. In Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" the soprano catches our hearts in the same way as she sings, "Remember me, remember me."

Like Schubert—or Cole Porter or Hank Williams, for that matter—Dylan sharpens the meaning of the lyrics in the mechanics of the music. Take "Mama, You Been on My Mind," which was long associated with Joan Baez and finally appeared in Dylan's own voice on the boxed set "The Bootleg Series, Vols. 1-3." The song begins with a crabbed, somewhat indecipherable image:

> Perhaps it's the color of the sun cut flat
> And covering the crossroads I'm standing at . . .

The harmony under these words moves from an E-major chord to a G-sharp seventh and on to C-sharp minor and an F-sharp seventh. It's an awkward series of changes which matches the baroque images on the page. Our eyes and ears go "Huh?" Then the singer seems to shrug off, with a self-deprecating grin, the attempt to poeticize his emotion—"Or maybe it's the weather or something like that / But Mama, you been on my mind"—and the harmony gets easier, too, swaying gently from E major to C-sharp minor and back to E. The meaning changes as the chords change.



Dozens of Dylan songs work in the same way. The disturbing gospel number "In the Garden" shows the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane by wandering through ten different chords, each one like a betrayal. "Idiot Wind," the centerpiece of "Blood on the Tracks," channels its universal rage—"Someone's got it in for me, they're planting stories in the press"—into a single harmonic convulsion: each verse of the G-major song begins with grinding C minor, which is like a slap to the ear. More often, the chords are mesmerizingly simple. In "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," there are just four of them, but they occur in an unresolved, drooping sequence—a picture of the "long black cloud" that comes down on Billy the Kid.

This is not to say that the music is everything. Dylan does have an original command of the English language. The neat click of the rhymes keeps you interested across all leaps of sense and changes of scene. John Lennon, not long before he died, satirized Dylan as a cynic who rhymed out of a lexicon, but I don't know of a dictionary that would have generated this couplet:

> What can I say about Claudette? Ain't
> seen her since January,
> She could be respectably married or running a whorehouse in Buenos Aires.

Dylan also has a knack for tricky enjambments—lines that seem complete in themselves but are subverted by what follows. These are effects for the ear, not for the eye, and Dylan sells them in performance. There's a tape of him singing "Simple Twist of Fate" in San Francisco in 1980, in which the meaning twirls almost word by word. It's a heavily rewritten version of the "Blood on the Tracks" song, and the last verse starts this way:

> People tell me it's a crime
> To remember her for too long a time

She should have caught me in my prime
She would have stayed with me
Instead of going back off to sea
And leaving me

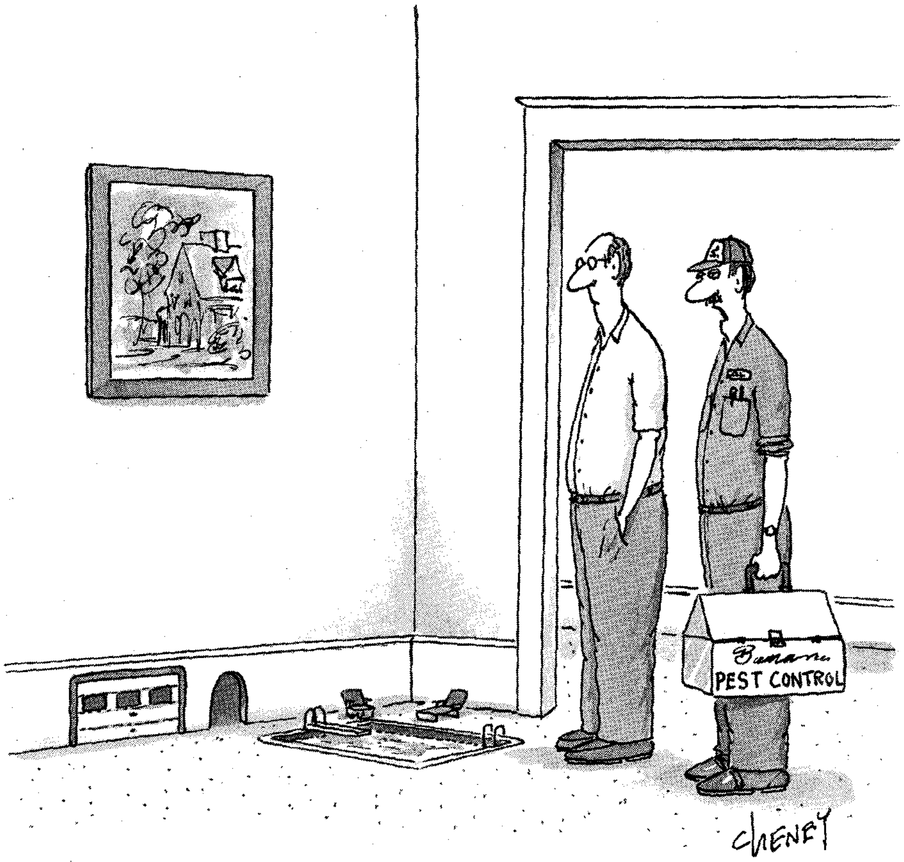
Dylan slows down, and we may think that the sentence is at an end. But it's not.

To med-i-tate . . .

A grin now creeps into the voice, which had been appropriately wistful before. Dylan's stress on "meditate" tells us that the title refrain is coming around for its final rhyme, but we can't guess how he'll make the leap. His voice fills with pride—pride is one of the great emotions that he can convey—and the tempo picks up again: "*Upon! A!* Simple! Twist! Of! Fate!"

THE peculiar solidity of Dylan's lyrics comes in their easy give-and-take with older songs. He has said that the old traditions of folk, blues, spirituals, and popular ballads are his real religion, and his habit of crossing genres may explain his habit of crossing religions. A few years ago, he said, "I believe in Hank Williams singing 'I Saw the Light.' " Dylan has a viselike memory for lyrics of all sorts, and his favorite method is to take a line from an old song and add one or a dozen lines of his own. "As I went out one morning," an old lyric says. "To breathe the air around Tom Paine's," Dylan adds. "Time Out of Mind" is thrillingly Dylanish, because he has returned with a vengeance to the magpie mode of writing. Old song: "She wrote me a letter and she wrote it so kind, / And in this letter these words you could find." Dylan rewrites the second line: "She put down in writing what was in her mind." Old song: "This train don't pull no gamblers, / Neither don't pull no midnight ramblers." Dylan says, "Some trains don't pull no gamblers, / No midnight ramblers, like they did before." There are a dozen or more borrowings in "Tryin' to Get to Heaven"—most of them from the "Spirituals" chapters of Alan Lomax's "Folk Songs of North America." These buried quotations may be a bit of a joke at the expense of rock critics, who listen to Dylan for news of his love life, mental health, and commercial viability. What happens to their diagnoses of Dylan's misanthropy when it turns out that the lines they quoted come from black spirituals?

"Time Out of Mind" is the first Dylan record in a while which has reached a mass public, but it has confused the diehard fans. Clinton Heylin, for one, rejects it as mere atmosphere; it promises, he says, "depths that aren't there." True, Dylan no longer seems to be writing individual songs: lots of phrases could be moved from one track to another, and everything goes under one dreamy, archaic mood. The album manages to skip the twentieth century: people ride in buggies, trains discourage gambling, there's no air-conditioning ("It's too hot to sleep"), church bells ring, "gay" means "happy," the time of day is measured by the sun, lamps apparently run on gas (and are turned "down low"), and, most of the time, the singer is walking. The wistfulness is intense. The singer is in love with a musical past that's gone forever. You picture him leaning late over his favorite records and songbooks, listening, writing, reading, writing. These are songs about the loneliness of listening: you could add to them "Blind Willie McTell," which was recorded in 1983 and appeared in the "Bootleg" boxed set as a kind of fanfare to "Time Out of Mind." "I'm gazing out the window of the St. James Hotel," he sang. "And I know no one can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell."



"You should have called me sooner."

The melancholy could become crushing, but Dylan doesn't let it. The best of the new songs are inexplicably funny: there's a wicked glee in the performance as Dylan manipulates the tatters of his voice, the scatteredness of his inspiration, the paralysis that might arise from his obsession with the past, the prevailing image of himself as a mumbling curmudgeon. And in one song—"Not Dark Yet"—all the flourishes of his songwriting art come together: slow, stately chords, swinging like a pendulum between major and minor; creative tweakings of the past ("There's room enough in the heavens" becomes "There's not even room enough to be *anywhere*"); prickly aphorisms ("I can't even remember what it was I came here to get away from"); and glints of Biblical revelation, not to mention what one Internet expert has identified as a reference to the Talmud ("I was born here and I'll die here against my will"). If he can't sing some low notes, he gestures toward them with a slide, so that you feel them. As he did in "Sad-Eyed Lady," he finds a way to intensify the refrain "It's not dark yet, but it's getting there." The line keeps creeping up, note by note, in the singer's now limited range. Like Skip James, the cracked genius among Delta-blues singers, Dylan gives a circular form a dire sense of direction.

The sense of arrival in "Not Dark Yet" is enormous. Once again, as Ricks would point out, words turn on their axis and encompass their opposite. The song ends, "I don't even hear a murmur of a prayer / It's not dark yet, but it's getting there." This couldn't be bleaker, could it? Bob Dylan stares into the face of death and decay. But as he sings "murmur of a prayer" he lifts the tune yet another step and does a graceful little turn at the top, creating an altogether new melody. And he slips in a triplet—a slight dancing rhythm that someone else picks up on guitar. As the song winds down, it's not the darkness that lingers but the freshly swaying motion in the music, and that momentary possibility of a "murmur of a prayer." The man who worships Hank Williams is looking back at "I Saw the Light"—a would-be uplifting gospel number that was really filled with terror. "I saw the light, I saw the light, / No more darkness, no more night," Hank insisted, in a melody that fell, and you didn't believe him. Bob declares, with a gallant upward turn, "I don't even hear a murmur of a prayer." You don't believe him, either.

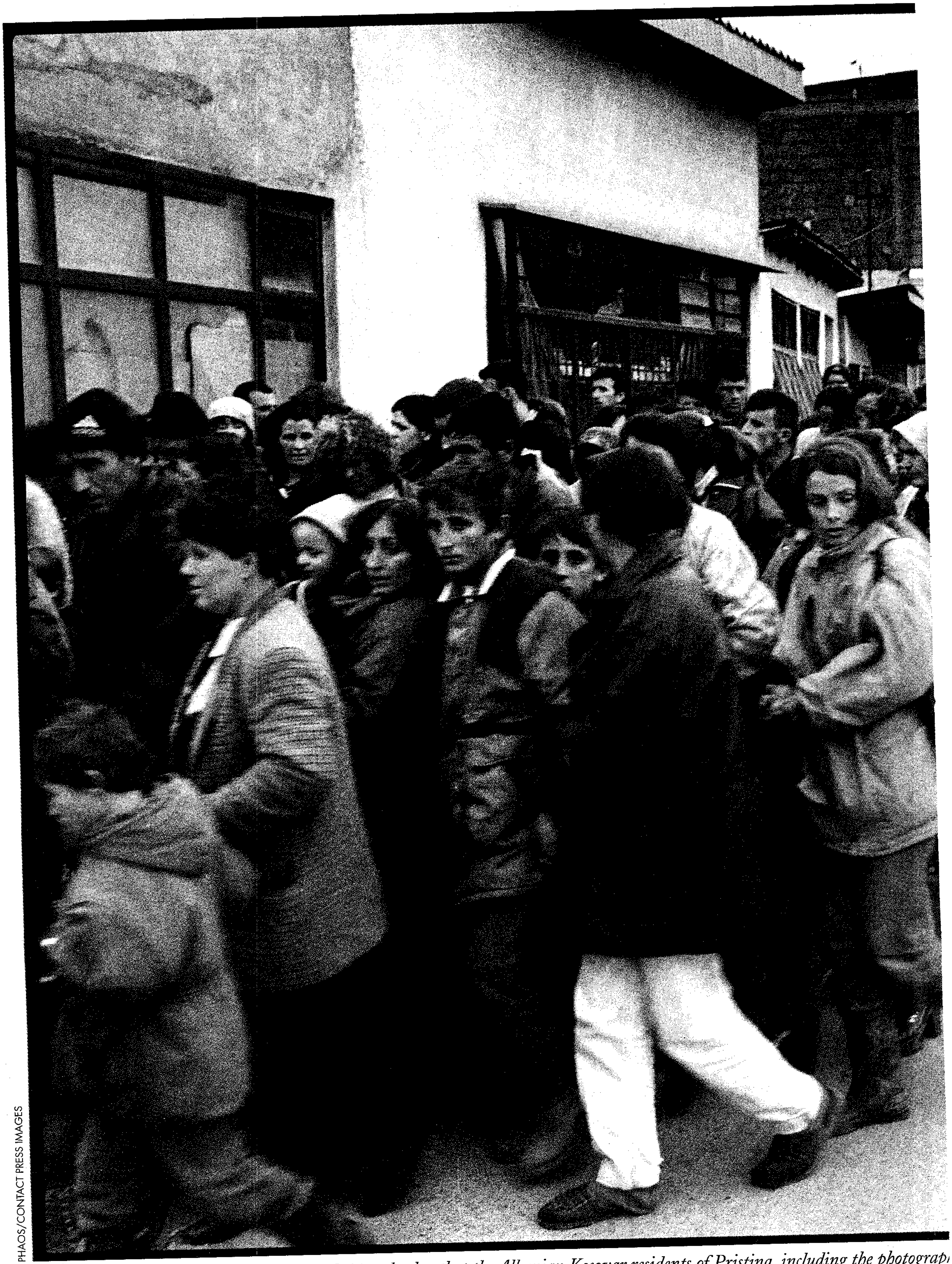
THE PROM DRESS:
ONE WEEK LATER

MINNEAPOLIS. Dylan has just played in Target Center, downtown. Toward midnight, walking away from the arena, I see a bus and a truck parked by a curb. A group of techies are loading equipment. There is bright electric light from somewhere—the spotlight of a handheld TV camera, it turns out. People are standing around, smiling sheepishly, as they do in the presence of someone famous. My heart begins to beat a little faster. A man with thick, tangled hair is standing next to the bus, looking awkward as he signs autographs. It's Lyle Lovett, who has just finished playing on the stage around the corner. I walk back to my hotel.

This episode pointed up for me the embarrassment of fandom. I hadn't expected to meet Dylan, but for a moment I thought I was about to see him up close. I felt the bubbling excitement of a fan. I'd been a fan, I suppose, since Dylan's music first hit me, a few years ago, while I was staying in a friend's apartment in Berlin. "Highway 61 Revisited" was one of the few records my friend owned, and after a couple of days I'd fallen for it: the fiercely funny lyrics, the music that was both common and grand, the whole proud, angry, backward take on life. I've since found that my belated conversion to Dylan matches up all too well with the latest research into rock fandom: Daniel Cavicchi, in a disquieting new study, divides fans into categories out of William James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," noting that one kind of fan undergoes a sudden conversion, or "self-surrender," often in a state of isolation or in a foreign land.

Is fandom as foolish as it feels? Or is it the respect owed to the sort of artist who used to be called "great"? Americans have always distrusted the concept of greatness, with its clammy Germanic air. Stardom, the cult of youth and wealth, long ago took its place. Dylan may be many things, but he is not a star: he can't control his image in the public eye. At the same time, he doesn't look, act, or sound like any great man that history records. He presents himself as a travelling musical salesman, like B. B. King or Ralph Stanley or Willie Nelson. He is generally unavailable to the media, but he is in no way a recluse, and reclusiveness is traditionally the zone in which American geniuses reside.

America is no country for old men. Pop culture is a pedophile's delight. What to do with a middle-aged, well-worn songwriter who gravitates toward the melancholy and the absurd? An "artist," by contemporary definition, is one who displays himself in art, who shares "felt" emotion and "lived" experience, who meets and greets the audience. (Such was the argument, I think, of "Shakespeare in Love.") Art becomes Method acting; art, in various senses, becomes pathetic. With Dylan, the emotion has certainly been felt, at one time or another, but it wells up spontaneously in the songs themselves, in the tangle of words and music. Even at his most confessional, he withdraws his personality from the scene—usually by becoming beautifully vague—and lets the music rise. The highest emotion hits late, in the wordless windups of his greatest songs—from "Sad-Eyed Lady" to "Not Dark Yet"—when the band plays through the verse one more time and language sinks into silence. ♦



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This photograph was taken on March 31st, the day that the Albanian Kosovar residents of Pristina, including the photograp
city immediately. Most residents had time to grab nothing more than a coat. Many left behind address bo

re ordered by Serb forces to leave the
d family photographs.

ANNALS OF DIPLOMACY

BALKAN PHYSICS

Five weeks ago, the bombing began. Now Europe is witnessing the worst conflict since 1945. How did so much happen so quickly?

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

A MAN-MADE escarpment of earth about a hundred feet high afforded a view of the whole scene. People came here to escape the dust, heat, and confinement below. Dusk was settling, and light was draining from the Macedonian sky. Kosovo lay five miles away to the north, over bare hills. In its direction you could hear muffled detonations and explosions. On the horizon, a convoy of NATO armored personnel carriers was visible, green metal moving among scrub pines. The most serious war in Europe since 1945 was close by, and yet it remained a ghostly presence, with bombers flying overhead, audible yet invisible in the fading canopy of the sky. A young couple sat on the escarpment, oblivious of everything, leaning against each other, wordless, as if needing time to take in the new reality: twenty-four hours before, in an abandoned ammunition dump below them, no one had been here at all. Now there was a tent city, with close to eight thousand people in it, and there were thirty thousand more at an airfield within sight. Chinook helicopters wheeled in the sky, with cargo nets full of tents and ready-meals swaying from their underbellies. As they landed on the hillside just behind us, swarms of children ran forward, disappearing into the clouds kicked up by the rotors. At the bottom of the escarpment, women and children with plastic bottles queued for water at the standpipes, and a long line, more than five hundred yards from end to end, wound right through the camp, like a dun-colored python, to a spot where French paratroopers in red berets and T-shirts were hauling ready-meals in bright-yellow plastic covers out of cardboard boxes. Another line was forming behind it for the empty boxes—to use as flooring for the tents. Rain clouds were gathering. Once the rain fell, this place would turn into a quagmire.

The constituent elements of a nation were on view below: country women, in the flowing trousers known as *shallvare;* old men in suits, and wearing the conical hat known as a *qeleshe;* and urban dwellers in track suits and T-shirts—architects, doctors, lawyers, and professors—from Pristina, Kosovo's capital, only fifty kilometres up the road. The country people were stoical and sat cross-legged on blankets, poking at the strange American ready-meals, in tinfoil packs. The city people seemed to be stunned, wandering to and fro, hands to their faces, trying to take the measure of their dispossession.

The television reporters persisted in calling this place, Stenkovec 2, a refugee camp, and in describing its inhabitants as the victims of a humanitarian disaster. But they were not refugees. They were deportees, victims of a political crime—the largest single eviction of a civilian population in Europe since the Second World War. The Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic had already earned its place in the annals of political science for mastering officially deniable ethnic cleansing in Bosnia; now Milosevic had perfected the mass deportation of civilians as a weapon of war. With it, he destabilized neighboring countries: first immobilizing opponents' forces by handing them a humanitarian and logistical catastrophe; then keeping them off balance by stopping the flow of deportees at the border and turning it back on; and, finally—following the adage that a

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AFRIM HARJULAHU

guerrilla swims in the local population like a fish in the sea—by draining the sea, exposing the guerrillas of the K.L.A., the Kosovo Liberation Army, who were left behind so that they could be finished off. Faced with war from the air, he decided to wage war on a people, and now a million men, women, and children were fleeing for their lives. Meanwhile, he denied having anything to do with their flight: the Kosovars, like the birds, he said, were fleeing the NATO bombs.

EMBEDDED STORMS

The earth makes ocean bottoms mountain tops:
so it's not *that* big a deal to shear a slope

of boughs: so what if rain washes the soil
downstream and builds a marsh somewhere: or

if the unweathered rock shines in the face of
a new day: or, a slightly more drastic case,

if oxygen disappears, and the anaerobes come
back out to play: it isn't as if possibility

falls along the line of human wish, if and
when the big wish is discernible: actually,

human wishes build out into filigrees of
branching, resembling, in fact, the realms of

possibility: I forgot for a moment that nature
freely makes small things of big things: take

for example the microbial soil previously
mentioned: how fine the little fellows work

the world, the microbes: you would be surprised:
what we have most to fear perhaps is when we

make a big human wish run over a host of little
possibilities, so that we lack the sight to

see or know what we're doing: when a
sand scooter runs over the desert, the tracks

disturb ten thousand years of adjustment in the soil:
is anybody going to wait around while the

In quiet voices, members of a deported nation told their story, as if baffled by the Biblical scale of it. They emphasized the fact that they had all witnessed the Serbian preparations, which appeared to have preceded the NATO airstrikes by weeks. They heard the rumors spreading among their neighbors and saw the increasing numbers of armed men in the streets. They told of sleeping in their clothes for days before the police came, sure of their fate but helpless to avoid it, since those who resisted were shot in the streets in front of their houses; they told of being warned by Serb friends, who then painted "*Srpska kuca*" ("Serb house") on their own doorways, so that the marauding policemen would pass them by, and of the paramilitary gangs in ski masks who thundered on their doors with rifle butts, giving them so little time to pack that many forgot to take their photographs or their address books. They described the corridors of armed policemen who lined the roads, directing cars toward the borders, and driving the people without vehicles to the Pristina train station, where they were loaded onto trains. As they fled for their lives, the men with guns taunted them, saying, "Go to NATO! They will protect you!" On being asked if it was the NATO bombardment that made them flee, they vehemently declared, No, it was not so. They supported the bombardment, even though it resulted in the accidental deaths of their compatriots. Why, they asked, weren't more bombs falling on the men who had driven them from their homes?

Their experiences left them pondering the dark complexities of people they had once called friends. When a Serb came to warn them to leave, was he acting out of complicity or out of friendship? When he offered to keep their apartment safe, was he doing so from fraternity or from greed? When Serbs leaned on their windowsills and silently watched them go, did their eyes register fear or approval? There were no such ambiguities concerning the men in ski masks, some of whose voices they recognized as those of onetime colleagues, even friends. When the women recalled being searched—they had been manhandled and their family savings (usually a wad of German marks) ripped from their undergarments—their faces crumpled into tears that expressed anger and shame but also sad disillusionment.

Below the escarpment lay a nation in pieces. Only its most elementary particle, the family, was left functioning. Lines of shoes were already ranged in order at the entrances to the tents. On the sloping canvas sides was the first laundry of exile. By nightfall, each tent had a small cardboard sign announcing the name of the family inside. The truly desperate were those who had been forced to leave alone. They now wandered up and down the rows of tents searching for their kin. If you had a mobile phone, they appeared holding out small scraps of paper with long dialling codes, and begged you to let them make just one quick call. This need to know—to discover who had escaped, who had managed to get to

adjustment gets back in shape: well, no, but
the earth doesn't care: it would just as soon

take the sand somewhere else and start over a
new program: the earth like anything was

never intended to be permanent anyhow so don't
get your hackles up if a company distributes

the top of a mountain to the grates of some
poor cold people caught up in the crotches of

sharp hills: one wall people keep flinging
themselves against is the one on which something

permanent could be written or attached: such
foolish hanging on to foolishness: earth will

heave up a sea bottom, as stated, and make a
beautiful island of the cone: and with the

tsunami byproduct it will overwash a nest of
island reefs already established green: so

what am I saying here: the dynamic recovers
all its forms and we, too, are wonderfully

made and wonderfully undone: but we really
would like wonders to remain as is, and we wd

like not to notice the moves that made them
so. . . . (a moral a day keeps the preacher away).

—A. R. Ammons

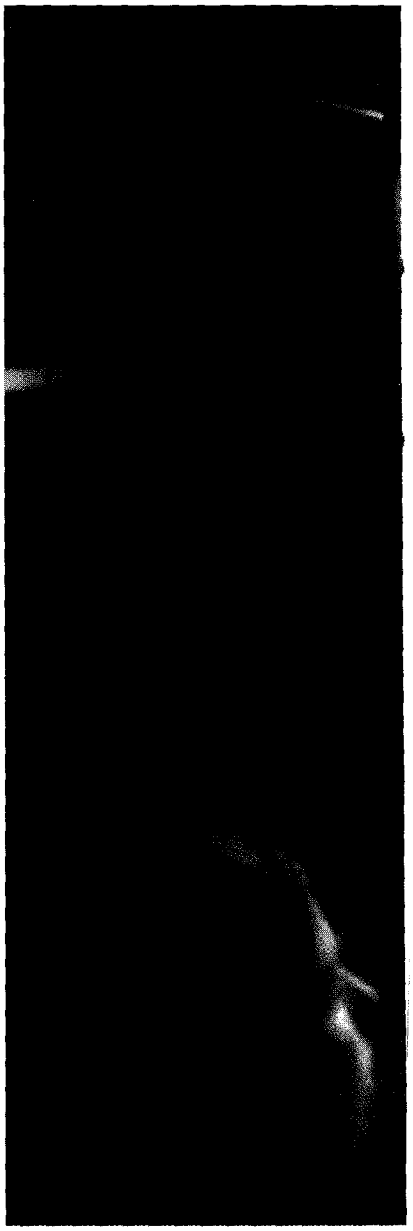
Germany, who was still trapped in Kosovo—was as fundamental a need as food, shelter, water, or sanitation. The French paratroopers who built the camp had provided for all the basic needs except this one. To fill the gap, a heroic trio of telecommunications workers from Pau, in southwestern France, who called themselves Télécom sans Frontières, set up shop in a tent with a single satellite telephone. They seemed to be the only aid workers who grasped the point that the Kosovars didn't conform to the clichés of destitution lodged in our minds by Ethiopia or the Sudan. These people were modern Europeans, with relatives and friends in every city on the Continent, and they needed phones to activate those networks. But the trio from Pau was soon overwhelmed, and Inmarsat—a London-based satellite and mobile-telecommunications firm—was persuaded to send down two more phones. In Brussels, the Canadian Ambassador to NATO, David Wright, heard about the problem, and NATO enlisted the help of another telecommunications company, Iridium, to set up eleven more. Soon the line for the phones was as long as the one for water.

The cellular phone also changed the experience of being at war, abolishing the traditional silence between sides. Up on the escarpment you could dial enemy territory when the reception was good and talk to old friends in Belgrade—Borka and Aleksa, Zdenka and Znezana. If this had become a war between value systems—between ethnic cleansing and human rights, between moral universalism and ethnic nationalism—the uncomfortable truth was that many people on the other side happened to share our values. They had taken to the streets in the great anti-Milosevic demonstrations of 1991 and 1996-97, had worked for a free press, needed no instruction in what an open society was, and now felt that they were victims of a West whose convictions they had once held as their own. Why hadn't Western governments done more to support democracy in Serbia? they wanted to know. Wasn't this the central policy failure of the past decade? Now, they said, they were being punished and bombed for the criminality of their regime. They, like the whole nation, were being morally excommunicated. As they talked, you could feel their Serbian and European loyalties beginning to sunder and split apart. "I understand the mechanism of madness on my side. But do you understand the mechanism of madness on your side?" one friend asked. I listened, and told him as dispassionately as I could what the deportation of a nation looked like as it unfolded below me. I said that the images were worse than what he had seen on CNN, not because of the conditions—which were better than in many camps in Africa—but because the crime, the ethnic cleansing, had been more malign and more meticulous than he could ever have imagined. I found myself telling another Serb friend on the phone that there is no such thing as collective guilt and that to hold the Serb people responsible would be to succumb to the ethnic determinism of the regime itself. My friend listened in chilly silence. After I described the refugee camp, I was told by another friend that her four-year-old daughter was walking around their flat in Belgrade with stereo earphones clamped on her ears to block out the sounds of fire engines and sirens. I sensed that the little girl's courageous Serbian mother was also blocking out the sound and could scarcely hear what I was telling her. Neither of us found it easy to listen. As I talked to her, I heard pots boiling on a stove and a meal being served. She asked me if it was true that such-and-such a building was on the target list—something that someone had heard on CNN—because if it was, she explained, I should know that it was only half a mile away from her apartment.

THERE was a cold clarity to be found on the hillside above the camp in Macedonia: it was as if I had at last got the meaning of a story that I had been trying to understand for years. I had lived in Belgrade as a child, in the late fifties, and had spoken Serbo-Croatian, as the language of Yugoslavia was called at that time. I began writing about the war during the fall of 1991, when Yugoslav warships shelled the old walled city of Dubrovnik to prevent Croatia from seceding, and United States warships cruised nearby, letting it happen. And I returned the following year and travelled through mile upon mile of ethnically cleansed towns on the plain between Zagreb and Belgrade, which had been left desolate by Milosevic's further attempts to prevent Croatian independence. Vukovar, that ancient episcopal town on the Danube, had been comprehensively bombarded, and its rat-infested ruins were then patrolled by Serbian paramilitary thugs who threatened to kill me if I wasn't gone by nightfall. Three years later, I drove through central Bosnia, past its toppled minarets, its gutted towns, and the downed bridge at Mostar, which I had crossed as a child when Yugoslavia was Tito's. Reaching Tuzla, I listened to the widows of the Srebrenica massacre telling their stories: how they had stumbled through the minefields and across streams, carrying children crazed with fear, leaving behind the bodies of as many as seven thousand men, executed by Ratko Mladic's Bosnian Serbs. In the following years, I went to Belgrade to visit the hostels and cheap hotels filled with the forgotten victims of Milosevic's wars: the Serbs—more than two hundred thousand of them—who had been driven out of Croatia in revenge. And now, sitting on that hillside in Macedonia, as I watched a dispossessed nation settle in for its first nights of exile, the full measure of what had happened in the past eight years—more than a quarter of a million people killed, another two million driven from their homes—suddenly seemed insupportable. Only one thought seemed possible. This cannot go on. This must be stopped. Now. By persistent and precise military force. The claim that there was no national interest at stake here suddenly seemed offensively beside the point. Both our interests and our values were at stake: we had taken far too long to realize it, and these people now settling in for the night in the camps below had paid the price.

How was it that after a decade of repeating that we wanted to banish ethnic cleansing from Europe we found a whole nation being cleansed before our eyes? How had we misjudged Milosevic? What had to be understood was the whole dynamic of American imperial power in this region. What had been the strategy for the Balkans? Was there one? Did the United States understand the tragic game it was playing?

I WAS to have lunch at the American Embassy in Skopje, in Macedonia, with Ambassador Christopher Hill. The Embassy had been one of the earliest targets of the war. On March 25th, the evening after the NATO bombing began, a crowd of about two thousand Macedonian Serbs swept aside metal barriers that had been erected to guard the grounds; smashed up the satellite trucks of the foreign television companies in the parking lot; and stormed over the security fence. A determined few used a flagpole as a battering ram to attack the bulletproof-glass entrance to one of the buildings inside the compound. They withdrew under clouds of tear gas, having failed to penetrate the building. Now, two weeks later, the Embassy was a Fort Apache in the south Balkans. At lunchtime, the Embassy canteen was serving hamburgers to huge American infantrymen in body armor, their M16 rifles racked up against the walls—gun butts wedged between rows of Kevlar helmets. Sitting in their midst was Hill, a sandy-haired, bespectacled, and athletic forty-six-year-old foreign-service professional, eating a Macedonian salad, and looking as out of place as a college professor in a barracks. Few American officials know the south Balkans better. He had attended an elementary school in Belgrade in the nineteen-fifties, when his father was political counsellor at the American Embassy. My father had also been a diplomat in Belgrade, and I had attended the same school. We reminisced for a minute about certain indomitable Serbian spinsters who had been our teachers. When I asked Hill how his childhood in Belgrade had affected him, he said, "It kept me from being anti-Serb." As a diplomat, he had served throughout the whole inflamed region. In Albania, Hill had tried to help the democratically elected President, Sali Berisha, pull the country out of clan-riven chaos, only to watch it slide toward complete disintegration in 1997, when the Army's armories were looted, and most of the country outside Tirana fell to family clans and their gunmen. Hill had been a



Albanian Kosovars described corridors of po

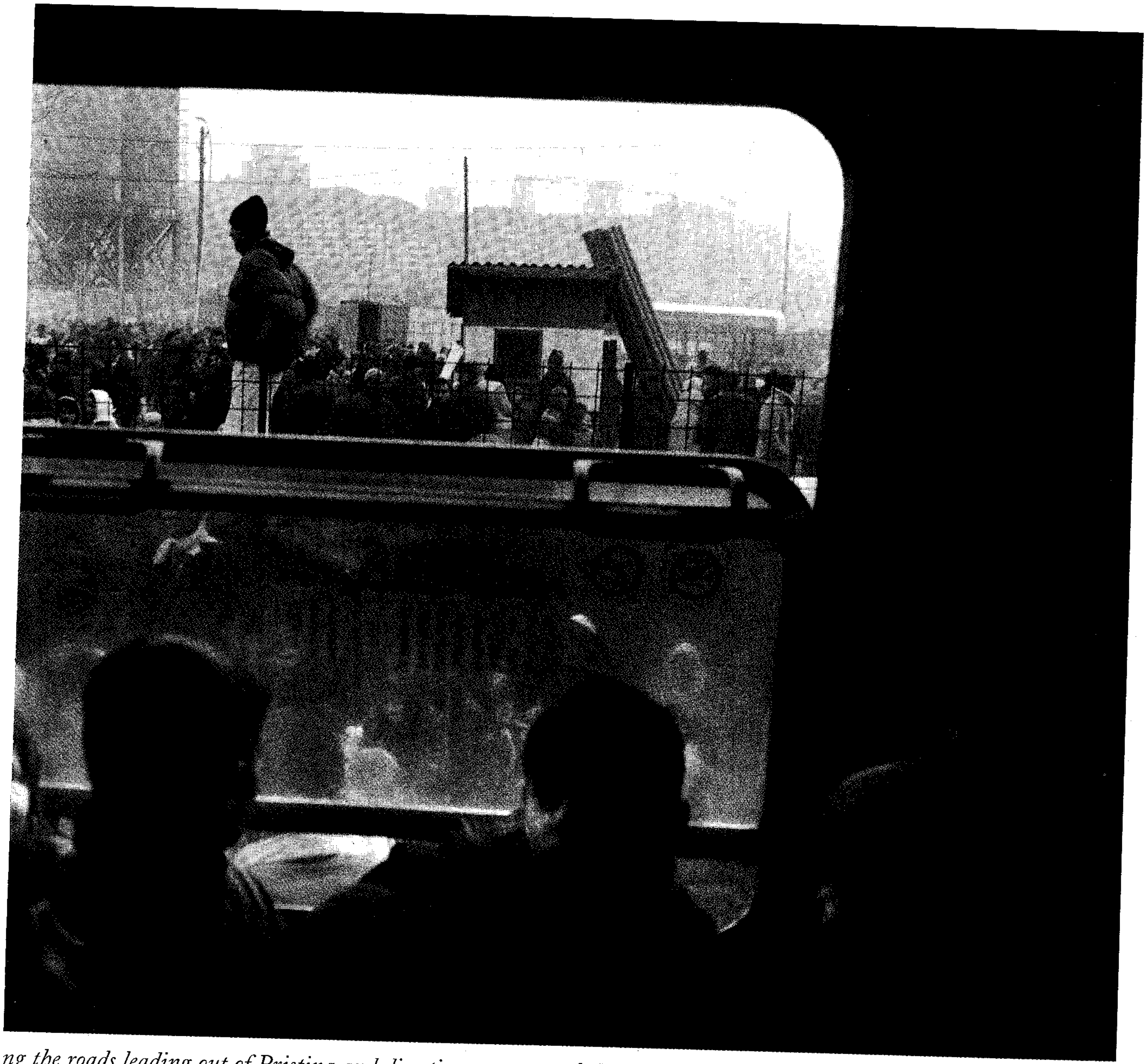
PHAOS/CONTACT PRESS IMAGES

key member of Richard Holbrooke's negotiating team at Dayton in 1995, which brought peace but also ethnic partition to Bosnia. Early in 1998, Hill had warned Washington that Kosovo was set to blow up. And during that summer he shuttled between Pristina and Belgrade, vainly trying to get both sides to negotiate. I had last seen him in a hotel corridor in Belgrade in December, groggy with fatigue after a fruitless meeting with Milosevic, and wondering aloud why the West was still, at the end of the twentieth century, liquidating the Ottoman Empire. Now eighteen months of dogged and detailed diplomacy were more or less in ruins, and he found himself guarded by marines and by a security detail in jeans and T-shirts, who glided about in the background, with large-calibre revolvers tucked into their belts in the small of their backs.

Hill does not wake at night replaying the tape of those fruitless eighteen months. He sees no reason to apologize for negotiating with an unindicted war criminal. Like most post-Vietnam Americans, Hill thought that every alternative to war had to be exhausted. And he believes that it was. In Hill's eyes, the inducements for Milosevic to settle at last February's peace negotiations in Rambouillet, in France, were considerable: in return for allowing NATO troops on his soil and a measure of autonomy for Kosovo, Milosevic would retain sovereignty over the province and would see his mortal enemy, the K.L.A., disarmed. The Serbian people would have had, in Hill's words, "an open road to the West."

So why did Milosevic turn down the deal?

The Ambassador watched the marines clumping out to resume guard duty behind the sandbags around his office. "The honest answer is that I still don't know," he said. Maybe the "road to the West" held no attractions for Milosevic's increasingly anti-Western electorate; maybe any deal signed by the K.L.A. was bound to be anathema to a man who regarded it as an organization



ng the roads leading out of Pristina and directing cars toward the borders; people without vehicles were loaded onto trains.

of terrorists. Most likely, he never negotiated seriously at all; at Rambouillet, the Serb delegation played for time, while back in Belgrade Milosevic was positioning his troops for Operation Horseshoe—a decisive semicircular sweep around Kosovo designed to achieve the final solution to his "Kosovo problem."

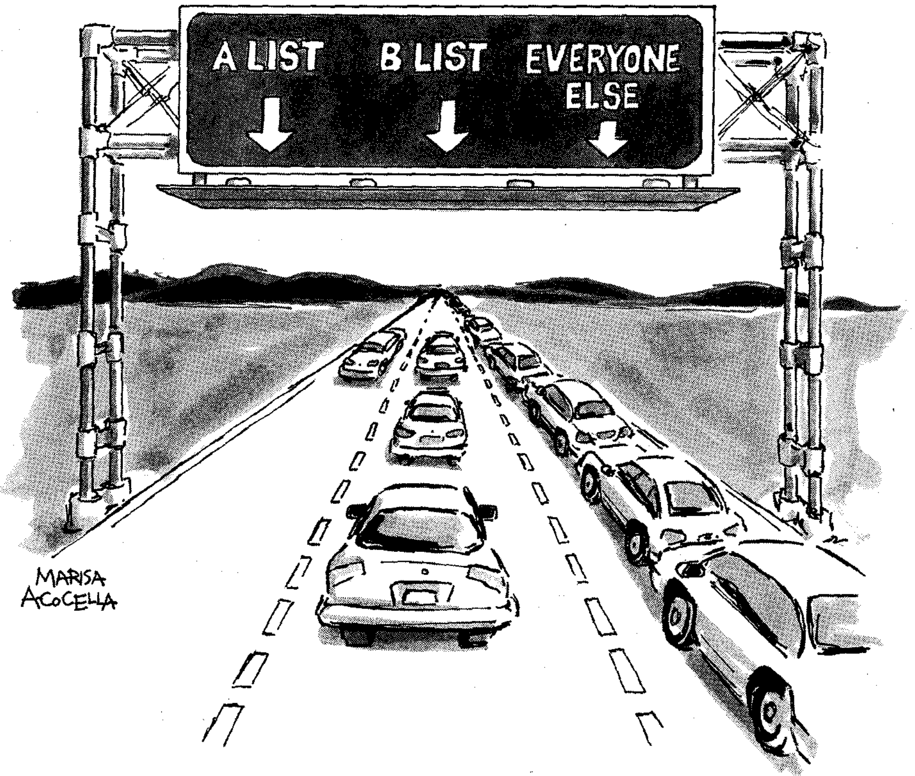
A WITTY Macedonian friend—Saso Ordanoski, who edits the monthly *Forum*—had reminded me that the Balkans were *not* a Newtonian universe. Balkan physics was chaotically unpredictable. The war was the result of a double miscalculation. Milosevic, in his cynicism, gambled that we would never fight for our values. In our innocence, we gambled that he would never risk destruction for his.

Hill said that Milosevic was a tactician, not a strategist, capable of thinking only one move ahead on the chessboard. What everyone failed to see was that he was tenaciously consistent. From late 1990, when the breakup of the former Yugoslavia became inevitable, Milosevic followed one simple principle. Faced with the demands for independence made by the country's constituent republics, Milosevic conceded it, but only where there was no substantial Serb minority, as in Slovenia and Macedonia. He let both countries go. In any country where there was a Serb minority substantial enough for him to arm, he armed it, and fought. The deaths of a quarter of a million people and the creation of two million refugees are the result of his unwavering application of this principle. Rather than allow other ethnic groups any chance for peaceful self-determination, he armed the Serbs and had them fight for their own self-determination. Rather than negotiate guarantees for the rights of Serbs in the states where they were the minority, he tried to destroy those states. And the West, lacking any equally consistent strategy for the dismemberment of Tito's Yugoslavia, let Milosevic have his way until it stopped him at Dayton.

Dayton brought peace to Bosnia, but it perpetuated an American illusion about Milosevic: that, while he was an unprincipled liar ("Believe me, I felt like washing my hands every time I came out of a meeting with the man," Dayton's chief architect, Richard Holbrooke, says now), he was someone Americans could do business with. The success at Dayton led them to believe that they had the measure of the man. In reality, it was he who had the measure of them. They watched as he traded away Sarajevo to the Muslims, betraying his Bosnian Serb cousins, while keeping Kosovo firmly under his control. He refused to meet with a group of Albanian-Americans who were pleading that Kosovo should be granted autonomy and that international observers should be dispatched to the province. Kosovo stayed off the Dayton agenda, and Milosevic emerged with his essential interests intact. In the years that followed—when NATO troops failed to arrest the Bosnian war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, who had been responsible for the shelling of citizens in Sarajevo and the massacre at Srebrenica—he drew the conclusion that the West could be counted on to talk about human rights and war crimes, and do nothing.

Western policymakers observed the cynicism with which Milosevic sold out fellow-Serbs in Bosnia, and they assumed that in Kosovo, where the Serb population had dwindled to less than ten per cent, he would do the same. After all, Belgrade wits in the nineteen-eighties used to joke that Serbs would do anything for Kosovo—except live there. We allowed ourselves to believe a cheerfully cynical scenario: that we would pretend to bomb Milosevic, and he would pretend to resist, and then a deal would be struck, with Milosevic abandoning a province that he could no longer control and handing it over to the international community. Certainly this scenario helps to explain the homeopathic dose of the first phase of the bombing: the bombs were messages in a diplomatic game that the West supposed was still in progress. In reality, diplomacy was over: Milosevic had reached what Holbrooke called "his red line." Milosevic could abandon the Serbs outside Serbia, but Kosovo was home ground: the site of the monasteries and churches of the Serbian Orthodox faith, the site of the 1389 battle in which the Serbian prince was defeated by the Turks, and, above all, a homeland that Serbs felt they were losing to the inexorable demographic increase of a multiplying population of ethnic Albanians, who seemed to be set on separation and independence. In deciding to go to war, Milosevic knew exactly where his ultimate interests lay, in contrast to Western lead-

"Special assignment, Chaswick. I need you to test our severance package."



ers, who believed until far too late that interests could be dissociated from values.

Once the bombing began, the objective shifted from getting Milosevic back at the negotiating table to "loosen[ing] his grip on the levers of power," as one NATO general put it. But to seek this was to misunderstand the nature of his regime. Just as he had pioneered ethnic cleansing and the use of refugees as a weapon of war, he had also developed a new style of post-Cold War authoritarian populism. He was neither a Pinochet, dependent on tanks, nor a Saddam, dependent on security police. His government was in fact duly elected, however unstable its coalition of mutually loathing parliamentary factions might be. It was held to be an irony that bombing increased his popular support. Actually, he had always enjoyed a genuine popular base. Bombing rallied his people around him, and there was no real prospect of a military coup. He simply did not depend on the generals for his power. Rather, he was more vulnerable to a split within his coalition and to street demonstrations. Yet even these he was likely to face down, for there was an essential feature of Milosevic's character which rendered him especially resistant to both democratic and military pressure. This feature was more than ruthlessness or lack of scruple. No one in the West quite understood what Baton Haxhiu—the editor of Pristina's main Albanian newspaper, *Koha Ditore*, who is now in exile in Macedonia—called Milosevic's "unbearable lightness of being," his blithe disregard for all human beings except himself, his wife, and his immediate family. We are waiting for capitulation from a man whose indifference to anything but his own survival is a matter of record.

Milosevic has also shown that he is able to use another old tool in a new way—the media. Instead of fighting NATO in the air, he has fought it on its own airwaves. By allowing CNN and the BBC to continue broadcasting, he hoped to destabilize and unsettle Western opinion, with nightly stories about civilians carbonized in bombed trains, babies killed in bomb shelters, and media workers incinerated by strikes on television stations. The most effective propaganda is always the kind that happens to be true, and these stories were confirmed by NATO: yes, we did bomb that convoy of Albanian refugees; yes, the pilot did see the vehicle on that bridge, but too late. Propaganda has been central to war since the dawn of democracy, but it has taken an authoritarian populist from the Balkans to understand the potential of manipulating modern real-time news to his own advantage. He has gambled his regime on the tenderness of Western hearts, on the assumption that the Western public will not allow an air campaign to become exterminatory. Perhaps for this reason, radio and television stations are regarded as legitimate NATO targets.

PRISTINA, Kosovo's capital, has been bombed. Its post office has been flattened, and the phone lines in the province are now mostly dead. The oil depots have been levelled. So have the barracks. But somewhere amid those ruins, or in a village nearby, were the Kosovar Albanians who had negotiated the deal at Rambouillet—the one that, if Milosevic had signed it, might have averted the war. They constituted one of the most unusual delegations in the history of diplomacy—a motley collection of guerrilla commanders, newspaper editors, and suave Western intellectuals, carpentered together for the occasion by the Americans, and so unfamiliar with each other that many of them had never met until they boarded the French military transport plane taking them from Pristina to Rambouillet. One of the negotiators, Veton Surroi, had been crucial in getting the Albanian side to defer its claim for independence and agree to disarm the K.L.A. "On fourth down, long yardage, with the seconds ticking away," as Hill put it, Surroi had placed his prestige on the line in order to cajole the K.L.A. leadership to sign. I had last seen Surroi, the dark-browed, elegantly dressed son of a former Yugoslav diplomat, at the Pristina airport in December, talking urgently to Holbrooke in an armored jeep on the tarmac beside Holbrooke's plane. After Holbrooke boarded the plane, Surroi told me, in bitter, accent-free English, that Ibrahim Rugova, the senior Kosovar leader, was "Jell-O all the way through." A week into the bombing campaign, Rugova had been forced to appear on television with Milosevic in a ghastly photo opportunity that, in the eyes of most Kosovar Albanians, consigned him to political death. With Rugova discredited, Veton Surroi epitomized the new generation of Kosovar leaders, who were gaining control of the Albanian movement.

But was Surroi still alive? When I asked Hill, he exchanged a quick glance with a staff person, Philip Reeker, then said that Surroi and his mother were alive, though low on food and hiding in a basement somewhere. That was all they knew about him, yet it was incredible enough: a man who only weeks ago had been savoring the cheese course at a French château in company with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the foreign ministers of France and Britain was now huddling in the dark somewhere in Kosovo, in fear for his life.

The Kosovo delegation at Rambouillet had had sixteen members. Hashim Thaci, the political leader of the K.L.A., had escaped to Albania and then reëntered Kosovo with what remained of his guerrilla units. Others were sheltering under the protection of K.L.A. units on the run from the Serb sweep, and still others had struggled across the border into Macedonia. Hill and Reeker thought that I might be able to find one of them—Blerim Shala, an editor and political activist, whom I had last seen briefing Holbrooke at the now trashed and burned United States Information Service cultural center in Pristina.

The search for Shala led me away from Skopje, along steep mountain roads, to Debar, a rain-soaked town near the Albanian border. In a pizza parlor overlooking a sodden square, the barman served up freshly roasted hazelnuts on a white paper plate, and as I nibbled and waited for Shala I watched Albanian women in kerchiefs and flowing trousers hop across the puddles holding on to their husbands' arms. Other women, younger, in jeans and T-shirts, who had been emancipated from Muslim habits, smoked and joked with men taking shelter from the rain under the awning of the town's only functioning coffee bar.

Suddenly, Shala appeared—a slim, worn-out-looking man in his thirties, with several days of stubble on his angular face, and wearing a wet jacket. He was accompanied by a brother-in-law who watched us intensely and said nothing. Shala seemed amazed by his change of fortune. "Imagine," he said. "A month ago I was shaking the hand of Mr. William Cohen, the Secretary of Defense of the United States. And now? When I walk through the streets of this town at night, the Macedonian police stop me and threaten me with deportation." He told his story in a quiet, idiomatic English. In late March, the members of the delegation had flown back from Paris to Pristina in a French military aircraft, knowing that Milosevic had turned down the deal, that airstrikes were imminent, and that reprisals against them were inevitable. But the scope and the ferocity of the reprisals had caught them by surprise. First, the paramilitary squads killed the human-rights lawyer Bajram Kelmendi (he had been collecting a dossier on Milosevic for a possible indictment by The Hague Tribunal for war crimes). After the murder of Kelmendi, the delegation went into hiding, its members letting their beards grow, wearing masks, and staying in basements: they would watch the paramilitary squads through cellar windows as they cleared the Albanian districts, block by block, house by house, apartment by apartment. After four nights, Shala made a run for it, with his mother and his brother's family, in a battered white Yugo. Failing to make it to K.L.A.-controlled areas, they turned back and joined a long line of cars heading for the Macedonian border. Like thousands of others, Shala and his family spent two nights sleeping in the car, but then they abandoned it and walked to the Serbian border post. The Serb frontier guards knew immediately that Shala was a member of the Rambouillet delegation, and for two hours he had to wait while Belgrade apparently made up its mind. Then the guards waved him through. Ethnic cleansing, in other words, could be fine-tuned: the regime could decide, individual by individual, whom to let through and whom to keep as a hostage. "I'm not alive because they missed me," Shala said simply. "I'm alive because they had orders." If Surroi was still alive in Kosovo, Shala believed, it was because Milosevic had decided that having him alive would be to his advantage. "You can't hide from Serb security in Pristina," Shala said. Ominously, Surroi's sister, in safety in Macedonia, disagreed. She feared that Surroi would either be killed or be forced to make some humiliating appearance, like the disgraced Rugova, on Serbian television.

As Shala looked back at Rambouillet, it seemed to belong to another world. In the surreal gentility of the French château, the delegations never actually talked. The Serbs were one floor below the Albanians, singing patriotic songs and carousing into the early hours. "They simply did not negotiate at all," Shala said. Meanwhile, Milosevic, back in Belgrade, had been boasting to everyone he met that all he needed was a few weeks to finish off "the terrorists." Though his intentions were never hidden, the scale of the operation exceeded anything that NATO intelligence had foreseen. What negotiation there was took place between the Americans and the Albanians, as Hill and Albright persuaded the Kosovars to defer demands for independence for three years and to disarm their guerrillas. To some senior American officials, it seemed like a chaotic waste of time to negotiate with only one side. But other officials maintain that the real point of Rambouillet was to persuade the Europeans, and especially the Italians, who tended to think of the Albanians as terrorists and drug traffickers, that the Albanians were actually "the good guys"—if nothing else, Rambouillet served to get the Europeans to "stop blaming the victims" and to build NATO's resolve to use force.

Intellectuals like Shala and Baton Haxhiu, the exiled editor of the Pristina newspaper *Koha Ditore*, now have time to rue their own miscalculations. By late 1997, these men had concluded that a strategy of nonviolence in Kosovo was getting nowhere, for Serb repression was getting worse and Western governments were looking the other way. Haxhiu told me that he had had secret conversations with top-ranking Serb security personnel in late 1997, and they had warned him that if the Kosovars persisted in demanding independence the Serbs would "burn every one of your six hundred and thirty-two villages to the ground."

When this threat was reported to the Americans, they did not react. Although American policymakers projected a tender conscience about human-rights violations, as long as the Kosovo problem seemed only a human-rights problem they did nothing. America's failure, Haxhiu said, was one reason that his generation decided to support the K.L.A. Young guerrilla commanders based in Albania, who had bought arms elsewhere in Europe, through the Albanian diaspora (and, yes, through its drug barons), began striking at Serb postal workers, soldiers, and policemen inside Kosovo. In a scant few months, they did more to put the Serbs on the defensive than a decade of nonviolent protest had done, and by March of 1998 Western governments were at last awakening to the fact that Kosovo was no longer a human-rights issue: there was a full-scale civil war in the province. But the K.L.A. drastically overreached itself, and Haxhiu believed that its tactical choices had been catastrophic. Trying to liberate villages and towns that it had neither the arms nor the men to hold, it exposed Albanian civilians to eviction and massacre by the Serbs. The K.L.A. also made other political miscalculations, the foremost being to demand full independence for Kosovo as a step toward a Greater Albania. Neither the Europeans nor America, the reluctant imperial guarantor in the region, had any appetite for altering existing frontiers. The prospect of an independent Kosovo terrified the neighboring countries—Macedonia, Greece, and Montenegro—that had Albanian minorities of their own. The extremists in the K.L.A. wrongly believed that they could change American minds. Today, in the cafés of Macedonia, there is plenty of time for Albanians to repent at leisure as they realize that they do not want the K.L.A. to become the primary political beneficiary of the NATO campaign. Chris Hill had remarked, in his wry manner, that the K.L.A. was never likely to win "the Thomas Jefferson award for citizenship." Baton Haxhiu emphatically agreed, saying, "We have had enough political commissars in Kosovo."

Now that the bombs are falling, and the West has entered the dark tunnel of a war that it sees no clear way of ending quickly, it is easy to conclude that all the mistakes were American ones. But if America misjudged Milosevic he also misjudged America. A case in point was Racak. This small village, near Pristina, figures in many people's recollections as one of the precipitating causes of the war. On the evening of January 15th, William Walker, the head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, which was charged with monitoring a ceasefire that Holbrooke had negotiated three months earlier, received a call from his British deputy, General John Drewienkiewicz, that something unusual had occurred at Racak. Walker set out early the next morning in a small convoy of orange-colored armored Chevrolet Suburbans. They reached the village at about ten-thirty on a bitterly cold Saturday morning. Distraught women pointed Walker and his party to a ravine behind the village, and there Walker came upon a body under a blanket. When he pulled back the blanket, he saw that the body was headless. Up the slippery, ice-filled ravine he climbed, past body after body—farm workers in muddy rubber boots and overalls, their clothing wet with urine and blood—and at the

TURBO-CAPITALISM MEETS ITS MATCH
We've had this sofa for 38 years.
Just try and make us buy a new one.

top of the ravine he found a pile of bodies. The observers counted forty-five in all.

Survivors told how security police had invaded the village, gathered all the men, marched them into the ravine, and, standing above them on the sides, fired down, killing them where they knelt. Walker did not clear his next move with Washington. At a press conference that evening, he called the Racak massacre a crime against humanity, and left no one in any doubt that he held the Serbs responsible. Other American officials were appalled, because the denunciation appeared to bring the Verification Mission squarely down on the side of the K.L.A., at a time when human-rights violations were occurring on both sides. Within forty-eight hours, Milosevic had declared Walker persona non grata, and, while Walker defied his expulsion order and stayed on, his mission was effectively over: its cars were stoned, Walker himself was threatened, his verification monitors were in danger.

Milosevic had miscalculated: he drove the monitors out, but the Racak story proved critical in the Administration's attempt to mobilize the European members of NATO to take military action. Until then, the Serbs had carefully calibrated their ethnic cleansing to a level that they believed NATO would have to accept. NATO's Secretary General, Javier Solana, had been circulating an ugly little joke reportedly made by a Serb diplomat: "A village a day keeps NATO away." Racak was just another village massacre: thanks to Walker, it proved to be one too many. Without Racak, airstrikes would never have begun. Without Walker's reaction to Racak, Milosevic might never have concluded that the Americans had tipped their hand in favor of the K.L.A. On the two occasions when Holbrooke went to see Milosevic in March, the Serb leader refused to negotiate and, instead, raged that the Americans were now siding openly with the "terrorists." Holbrooke returned to Washington sure that war was inevitable. By then, moral disgust at Racak would have made further diplomacy look like appeasement.

Milosevic thereupon made a deeper miscalculation: he assumed that when it came to the use of force Clinton and his European allies would prove to be as vacillating in Kosovo as they had been in Bosnia. In Bosnia, an inexperienced Administration first scuppered an international peace initiative—the Vance-Owen peace plan—in February, 1993; then proposed arming the Muslims and striking the Serbs from the air, only to lack the resolve to overcome European hesitation; and then stood back and watched a United Nations peace-keeping effort fall apart, culminating in the Srebrenica massacre of July, 1995. Four years later, Milosevic concluded that this catastrophic failure of will would repeat itself in Kosovo.

But it wouldn't be repeated. A number of things had changed. There was a new Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, the daughter of a Czech diplomat forced into exile after Munich, who was especially sensitive to the appearance of appeasement. (Her spokesman, James Rubin, recalls a conference in London at which he proposed that Albright consider a face-saving formula to describe the negotiations with the Serbs, only to find himself dressed down in public. "This is London, remember," she boomed, "not Munich.") Kosovo was not going to be this Administration's Munich. There was also a new generation of airborne weapons. At the beginning of Clinton's Presidency, Tomahawk missiles could target a building. By 1999, they could target a bedroom—even the bedroom of the leader of Serbia. Their accuracy seemed to lower the political cost of using them. They appeared to offer America a guilt-free war. The result, however, has been something infinitely more complex.

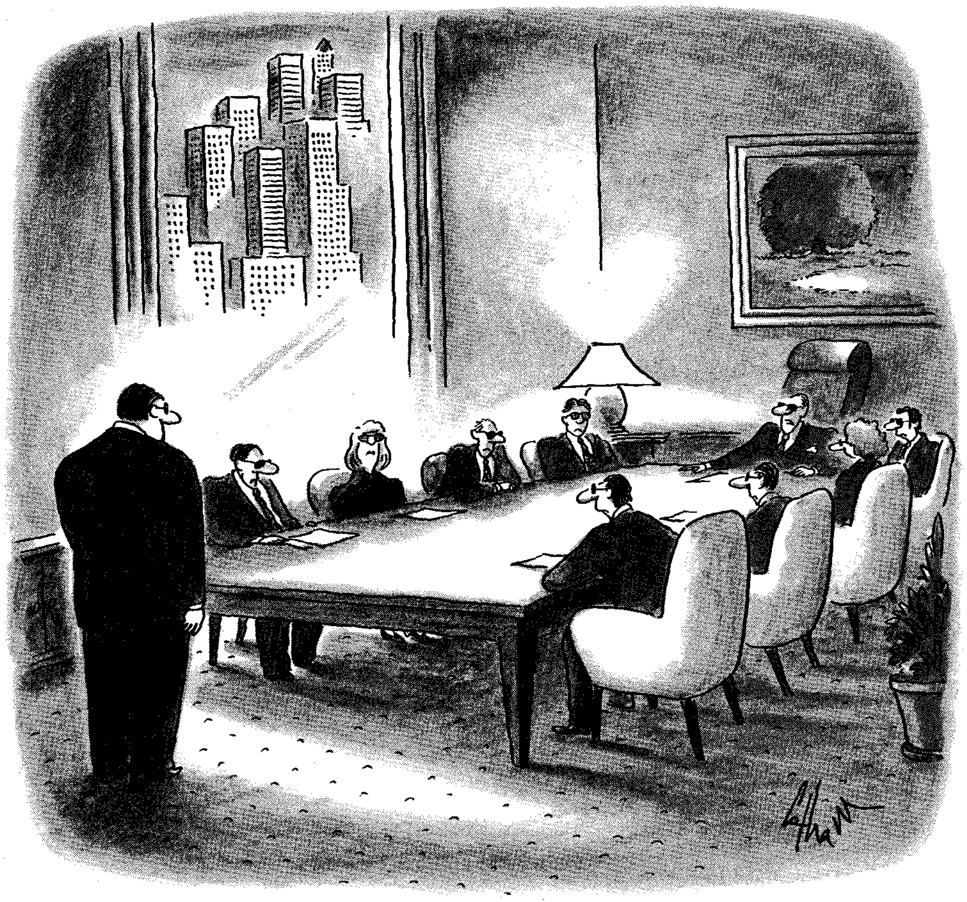
The appeal of high-tech warfare is that it saves lives. It presents a way of conducting a war that appears to be governed by two moral constraints: avoiding civilian casualties and avoiding risk to pilots. But the two constraints have turned out to be in direct contradiction. To target ethnic cleansers effectively, you have to fly low. If you fly low, you lose pilots. Fly high, and you get civilians. By the second month of the bombing, NATO's priority had become clear: the lives of its professionals were more important than the lives of innocent foreign civilians. But what was its strategy? Victory seemed to rest on one of two possible outcomes: either the

Bernard Schoenbaum

"Sex . . . sex . . ."

bombing would eventually work, and Serbia would give up, or it would lead to a diplomatic solution.

In the first possible outcome, Serbia, with or without Milosevic, would be bombed into surrendering, and would no longer have the capacity to resist NATO's entering the country. The refugees would then be returned, and Kosovo would be made an international protectorate indefinitely. But how long would that take? Even the generals seemed to understand that the bombing's success depended not on military facts but on psychological imponderables: who would crack first, the Serbian regime or a Western public, disgusted by the carnage it was witnessing on its televisions? In fact, the generals have been explicit in declaring that the air campaign alone will not be enough—a declaration made with all the candor of military leaders who believe they must distance themselves from flawed political instructions. General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander, has been commendably frank: after five weeks of bombing, there are, he admits, more Serb forces inside Kosovo than when the bombing began.



"Tell the public we don't want to hurt anyone. All we want is their money."

• •

In a second scenario, the Serbs, weakened by the bombing, would allow the Russians to dictate a settlement. Such a settlement would also introduce ground troops and turn the province into some kind of protectorate of the United Nations. Can the Russians play the role of peacemaker? They certainly recognize the need to be one. They are alarmed by the prospect of a victorious NATO expanding right up against their western frontier, and this alarm has been one of the fears that the American Administration has had to defuse. Yet senior Western officials, who have dealt with President Yeltsin and his envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin, maintain that eventually the Russians will coöperate and that in weeks, rather than months, the Russians could be in a position to force their Serbian allies to sign a surrender. But are the Russians really ready to take on that responsibility? As one Russian official told a senior Western diplomat, "We have many Kosovos of our own."

What then? What if neither bombing nor diplomacy works? What if Milosevic refuses to capitulate? You can imagine the result. NATO will declare the aggressor punished, announce victory, and return its bombers to base. The West will disguise its humiliation. But a deported Albanian nation cannot be disguised. It will remain in exile in the camps, and NATO's bankruptcy will be too obvious to hide. Even Henry Kissinger, long an opponent of Albright's moralizing arguments for intervening in other countries' conflicts, recognizes that, now that the bombing has begun, NATO cannot be allowed to fail. If it does, the entire strategic architecture that has linked American and European interests since the Second World War will be in ruins.

The remaining alternative is ground troops. Although NATO has not admitted it, the air campaign has clearly been designed to prepare for introducing troops into the war. Serbian troop concentrations have been bombed, artillery has been destroyed, and so have munitions dumps and oil supplies. And, while no one is prepared to say exactly how many soldiers would be required to suppress the Serb resistance that remains, the number is likely to be very large. An American military that is explicitly suspicious of its Commander-in-Chief's resolve might well insist on full enforcement of the Colin Powell dictum: overwhelming force superiority, colossal logistical backup, massive, persistent, and all-encompassing operations. Such a buildup, however, would take time, and would probably defer a ground assault until much later in the year: after the autumn rains and the winter snows. Meanwhile, an Albanian nation in exile under canvas would freeze to death.

There is another possibility, a riskier one, a deployment that relies not on overwhelming numbers but on speed and surprise: parachute units that could be lifted up over the mountains and dropped down along the key supply roads, Apache helicopters that would need to target Serb forces on the ground, and Marine troops, dispatched from the warships in the Adriatic, that would establish corridors of entry for the tanks, artillery, and ground troops that would follow. A surprise deployment would face an experienced Serbian Army that had superior knowledge of the terrain and a strong tradition of partisan guerrilla war. Such an army would want to fight asymmetrically, breaking into small units, avoiding full battle, and seeking not to win outright but to do whatever damage it could, bit by bit—downing just enough helicopters and killing just enough troops to break NATO's resolve. It could, in effect, be a European enactment of the Vietnam War. The prospect is sobering even for the most convinced interventionist. But a NATO defeated—and now anything less than Milosevic's capitulation and the full return of the refugees is a defeat—would leave the two global civilizations, Europe and America, without a credible defense alliance.

THE truth is that America has never had a coherent Balkans policy. It reacted to Milosevic; it never succeeded in anticipating his game. For a decade, America's policies were driven by massacre, crisis, and catastrophe. Now it has to grasp history itself and make it obey a grander design. After improvising for a decade, the Administration faces the challenge of devising a policy response equal to the size of the chaos that Milosevic has unleashed. But in an Administration where "the urgent," in one American diplomat's words, is "always crowding out the important," creating a new security architecture for the whole region is a daunting task.

Suddenly, much more than Kosovo is in question. An entire network of south Balkan states is at risk, and there is no quick answer and no neat exit strategy. A ravaged, burned, and bombed Kosovo will now have to be rebuilt. Macedonia, with its agonizing ethnic mixture and its shaky coalition government, will have to be stabilized with NATO troops. Montenegro, still a republic unwillingly yoked to Serbia, will also need protecting; a protectorate for Kosovo logically implies a protectorate for Montenegro, too. Albania, stunned by the impact of the refugee crisis, is a country without a state. Bulgaria and Romania, Serbia's neighbors to the east, need security guarantees of their own. America—the reluctant empire—is suddenly being asked, by every small country in the region, to be the guarantor of its peace and security. Of course, the Europeans could provide money, expertise, and humanitarian help. But the leadership has to come from a nation that has been notoriously ambivalent about "foreign entanglements." Not just a President but an entire generation of European leaders who came of age in the nineteen-sixties is now standing before the verdict of history.

IN Stenkovec 2, the refugees gathered in the darkness of their tents to make agonizing choices of their own. Promises had been made to them. Strobe Talbott, in Macedonia, had said, "They're going back to a Kosovo that is safe and secure and self-governing." William Walker toured a camp and made the same pledge. But when? Families huddled in conclaves to decide whether to accept the offer of a place in Trier, Germany, or to stay put and be ready to follow the troops back up the road to Pristina. I listened as families struggled to make sense, in private, personal ways, of the very abstract geopolitical arguments being conducted over their heads. With children dozing in their laps, parents leaned together, heads touching, trying to make choices that might change their lives and their children's lives forever. They knew that if they stayed they risked becoming trapped, like so many Bosnian refugees, some of them still in camps in Macedonia five years after the fighting stopped; if they left, they might never see Kosovo again. I listened, and when they asked for advice I tried not to deceive them. It was painful to tell them that the Administration and Congress were hesitating; that the earliest that troops could be ready for ground operations was late summer; and that if they stayed in the camps they could be trapped by the winter snows. Most reluctantly boarded the buses for the airport to take planes bound for Germany. They were weeping. The camps were no place for children. The families had no time to wait for men in Washington and Brussels to steel themselves for the next level of moral risk. ◆

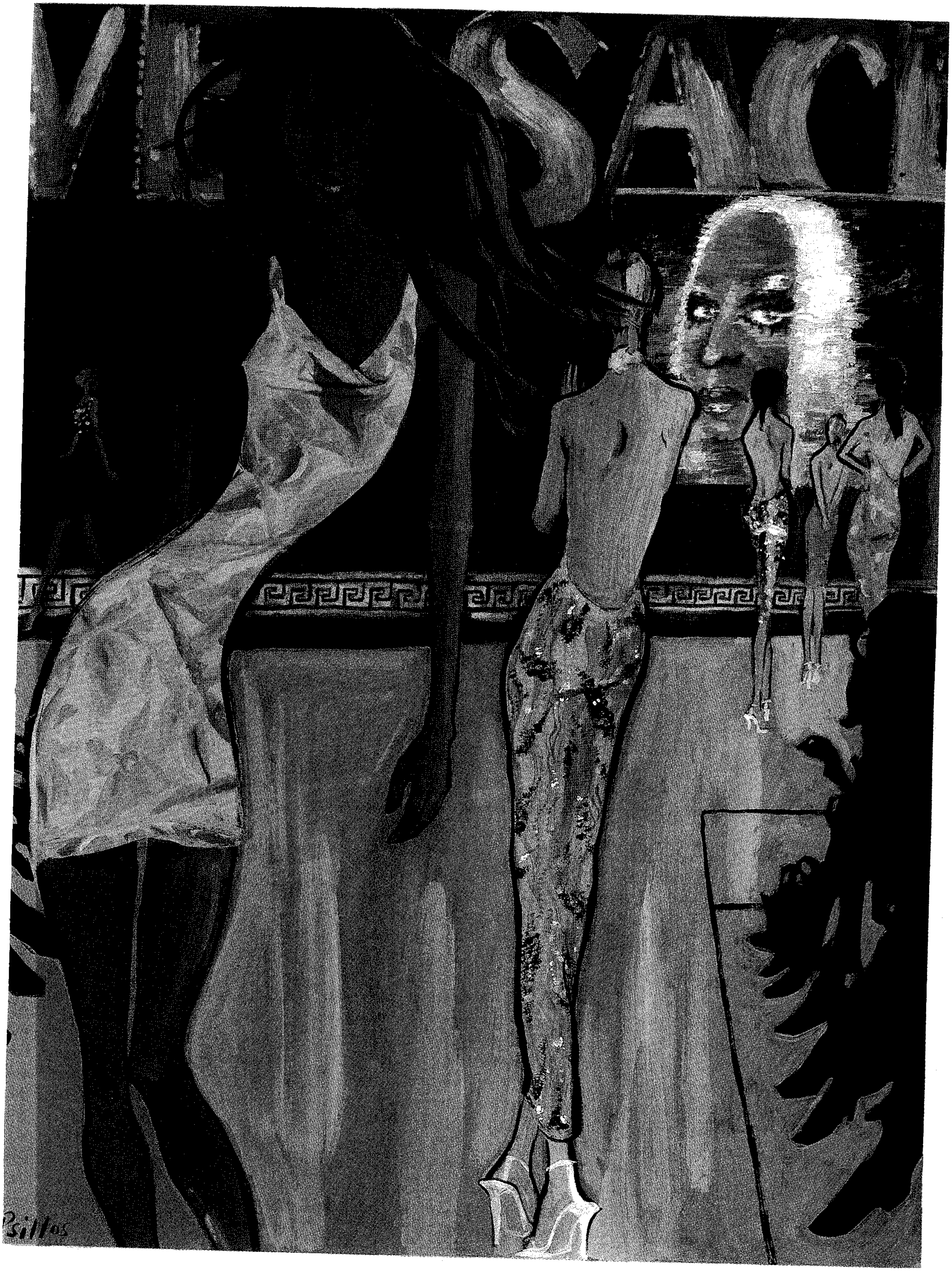
DOWN THE RUNWAY

KREMLIN COUTURE

WHEN the world of fashion finally came to Russia, in the late eighties—first in magazines, then in boutiques—Gianni Versace was immediately singled out by the New Russians, the fleet breed that was quickest to enrich itself in the twilight world of early economic reforms. That a man's sports coat could be scarlet or light-blue or lettuce-green was a fantastical revelation to them. Almost at once, they abandoned their sweatsuits (the initial uniform of the Russian neo-capitalist) for Versace's theatrically hued tailoring.

As a kind of celebration of the clothes, and as a tribute to the man who made them, the State Kremlin Palace played host recently to a Versace fashion show, along with three ballets by Maurice Béjart, for one of which Versace designed the costumes. The Kremlin Palace, a sixties-era white elephant built within the fifteenth-century red walls of the greater Kremlin, had once been the scene of Communist Party Congresses, a sea of thousands of bad gray suits. And so it was something of an iridescent shock to find the same hall dominated by the leonine Naomi Campbell, gliding down a catwalk on tall silver heels. Campbell was the only imported talent, and the local models who walked behind her in pastel bikinis, in gleaming sheaths cut low in the back and high on the thigh, didn't approach her regal magnificence. By contrast, they marched down the runway with grim determination, "as if their contracts had been cancelled just before the show," in the words of one Moscow critic. At the end of the fashion show, when a huge image of Donatella Versace was projected onto a big screen over the catwalk, the Russian models turned their backs on the audience, looked up dutifully, and applauded. Naomi Campbell had already slithered backstage.

—MASHA LIPMAN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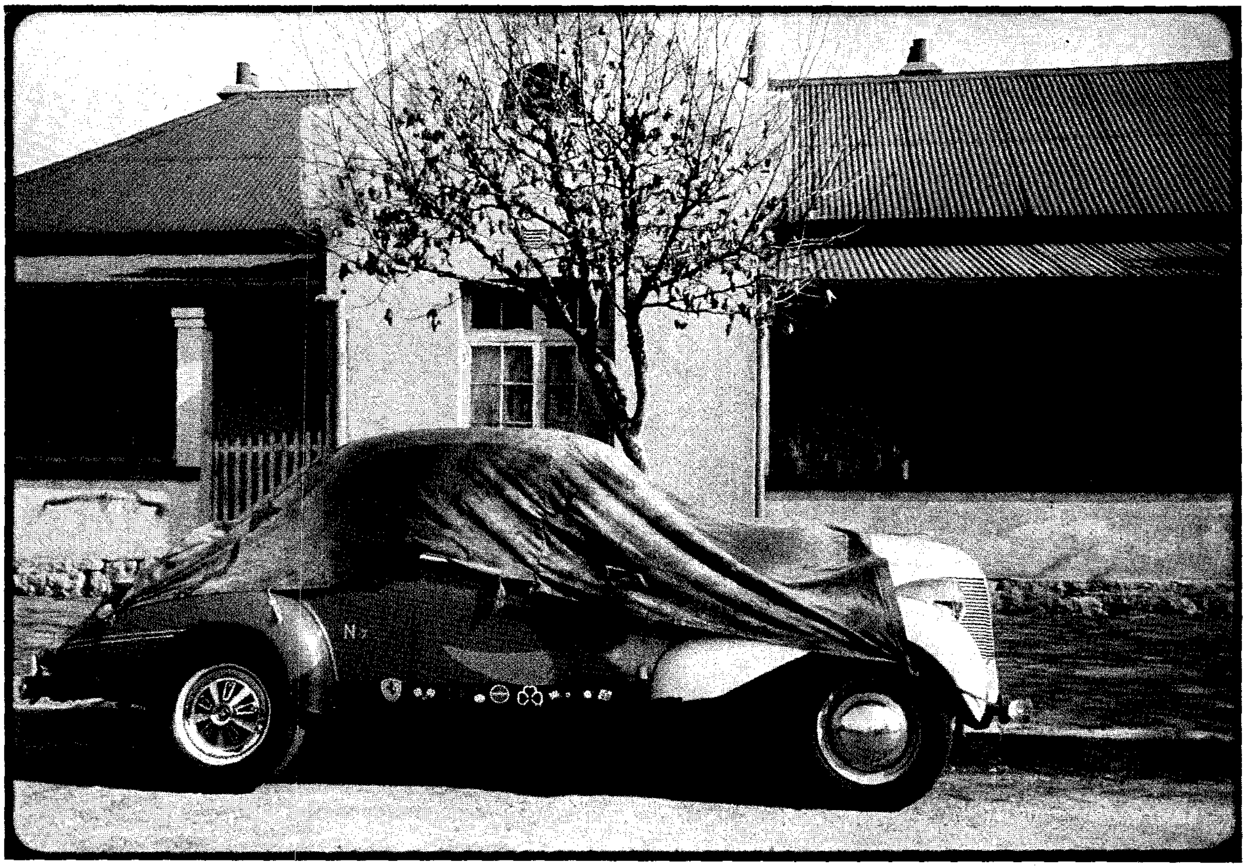
FICTION

THE DIAMOND MINE

Love during wartime.

BY NADINE GORDIMER



I'LL call her Tilla. You may call her by another name. You might think you knew her. You might have been the one. It's not by some simple colloquial habit that we "call" someone instead of naming: call him up.

It is during the war, your war, the forties, that has sunk as far away into the century as the grandfathers' 1914. He is blond, stocky in khaki, attractively nearsighted, so that the eyes, which are actually having difficulty with focus, seem to be concentrating attentively on her. This impression is emphasized by his lashes, blond and curly as his hair. He is completely different from the men she knows in the life of films—the only men she knows, apart from her father—and whom she expected to come along one day not too far off, Robert Taylor or even the foreigner, Charles Boyer. He is different because—at last—he is real. She is sixteen. He is no foreigner, no materialization of projection from Hollywood. He's the son of friends of her maternal grandmother, detailed to a military training camp in the province where the girl and her parents live. Some people even take in strangers from the camp for the respite of weekend leave; with a young daughter in the house, this family would not go so far as to risk that, but when the man of the family is beyond call-up age an easy way to fulfill patriotic duty is to offer hospitality to a man vouched for by connections. He's almost to be thought of as an elective grandson of the old lady. In war these strangers, remember, are Our Boys.

When he comes on Friday night and stays until Sunday his presence makes a nice change for the three, mother, father, and daughter, who live a quiet life, not given to socializing. That presence is a pleasant element in the closeness between parents and daughter: he is old enough to be an adult like them and, only eight years ahead of her, young enough to be her contemporary. The mother cooks a substantial lunch on the Sundays he's there; you can imagine what the food must be like in a military camp. The father suggests a game of golf—welcome to borrow clubs—but it turns out the soldier doesn't play. What's his game, then? He likes to fish. But this hospitality is four hundred miles from the sea; the soldier laughs along in manly recognition that there must be a game. The daughter: for her, she could never tell anyone, his weekend presence is a pervasion that fills the house, displaces all its familiar odors of home, is fresh and pungent—he's here. It's the emanation of khaki washed with strong soap and fixed—as in perfume the essence of flowers is fixed by alcohol—by the pressure of a hot iron.

The parents are reluctant cinemagoers, so it is thoughtful of this visiting friend of the family to invite the daughter of the house to choose a film she'd like to see on a Saturday night. She has no driving license yet (seventeen was the qualifying age in those days) and the father does not offer his car to the soldier. So the pair walk down the road from streetlight to streetlight, under the trees, all that autumn, to the small town's center, where only the cinema and the pub in the hotel are awake. She is aware of window dummies, in the closed shops that her mother's friends patronize, observing her as she walks past with a man. If she is invited to a party given by a school friend, she must be home strictly by eleven, usually fetched by her father. But now she is with a responsible friend, a family connection, not among unknown youths on the loose; if the film is a nine-o'clock showing, the pair are not home before midnight, and the lights are already extinguished in the parents' bedroom. It is then that, schoolgirlish, knowing nothing else to offer, she makes cocoa in the kitchen, and it is then that he tells her about fishing. The kitchen is locked up for the night, the windows are closed, and it is amazing how strong that presence of a man can be, that stiff-clean clothing warmed—not a scent, not a breath but, as he moves his arms graphically in description of playing a catch, it comes from the inner crease of his bare elbows, where the sun on Maneuvers hasn't got at the secret fold, from that center of being, the pliant hollow that vibrates between his collarbones as he speaks, the breastplate rosy down to where a few brownish-blond hairs disappear into the open neck of the khaki shirt. He will never turn dark, his skin retains the sun, glows. Him.

Tilla has never gone fishing. Her father doesn't fish. Four hundred miles from the sea, the boys at school kick and throw balls around—they know about, talk about football and cricket. The father knows about, talks about golf. Fishing. It opens the sea before her, the salt wind gets in her narrowed eyes, conveying to her whole nights passed alone on the rocks. He walks from headland to headland on dawn-wet sand, the tide is out—sometimes in midsentence there's a check, half smile, half breath, because he's thinking of something this child couldn't know. This is his incantation; it shuts out the parade-ground march toward killing and blinds the sights that the gun trains on sawdust-stuffed figures on which he is being drilled to see the face of the enemy, to whom he himself is the enemy, with guts (he pulls the intricately perfect innards out of the fish he's caught, a fisherman's simple skill) in place of sawdust. The sleeping parents are right: he will not touch her innocence of what this century claims, commands from him.

As they walk home where she used to race her bicycle up and down under the trees, the clothing on their arms—the khaki sleeve, the sweater her mother has handed her as a condition of permission to be out in the chill night air—brushes by proximity, not intention. The strap of her sandal slips, and as she pauses to right it, hopping on one leg, he steadies her by the forearm and then they walk on hand in hand. He's taking care of her. The next weekend, they kiss in one of the tree-dark intervals between streetlights. Boys have kissed her; it happened only to her mouth. The next Saturday, her arms went around him, his around her, her face approached, was pressed, breathed in, and breathed against the hollow of neck where the pendulum of heartbeat can be felt, the living place above the breastplate from which the incense of his presence had come. She was there.

In the kitchen there was no talk. The cocoa rose to the top of the pot, made ready. All the sources of warmth that her palms had extended to, everywhere in the house, as a domestic animal senses the warmth of a fire to approach, were in this body against hers, in the current of arms, the contact of chest, belly muscles, the deep strange heat from between his thighs. But he took care of her. Gently loosened her while she was discovering that a man has breasts, too, even if made of muscle, and that to press her own against them was an urgent exchange, walking on the wet sands with the fisherman.

The next weekend leave—but the next weekend leave is cancelled. Instead there's a call from the public phone at the canteen bar. The mother happened to answer and there were expressions of bright and encouraging regret that the daughter tried to piece into what they were responding to. The family was at supper. The father's mouth bunched stoically: Marching orders. Embarkation. The mother nodded round the table, confirming. She—the one I call Tilla—stood up, appalled at the strength to strike the receiver from her mother and the inability of a good girl to do so. Then her mother was saying, But of course we'll take a drive out on Sunday, say goodbye and Godspeed. Grandma'd never forgive me if she thought... Now, can you tell me how to get there, beyond Pretoria, I know... I didn't catch it, what mine? And after the turnoff at the main road? Oh, don't bother, I suppose we can ask at a petrol station if we get lost, everyone must know where that camp is. Is there something we can bring you, anything you'll need...

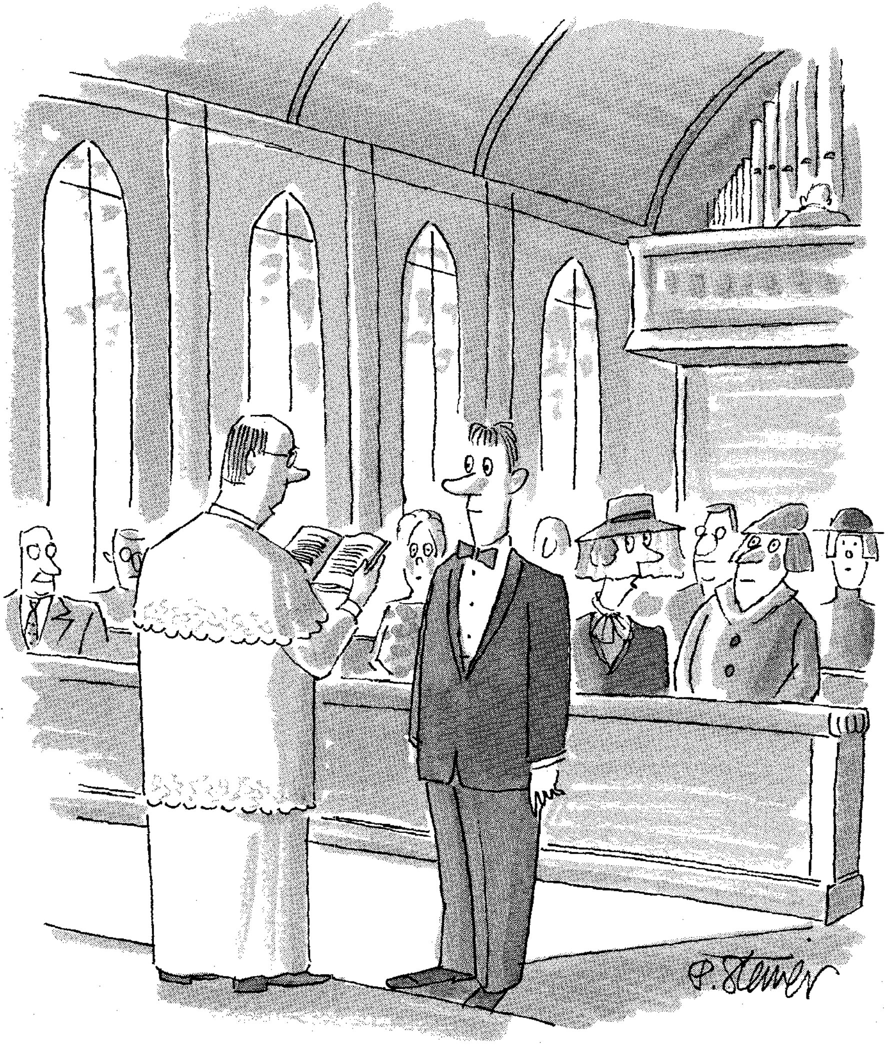
It seems they're to make an outing of it. Out of her stun: that essence, ironed khaki and soap, has been swept from the house, from the kitchen, by something that's got nothing to do with a fisherman, except that he is a man and, as her father has stated—embarkation—men go to war. Her mother makes picnic preparations: Do you think a chicken or pickled ox tongue, hard-boiled eggs.... Don't know where one can sit to eat in a military camp, there must be somewhere for visitors. Her father selects from his stack of travel brochures a map of the local area to place on the shelf below the windshield. Petrol is rationed, but he has been frugal with coupons; there are enough to provide a full tank. Because of this, plans for the picnic are abandoned—no picnic—her mother thinks, Wouldn't it be a nice gesture to take the soldier out for a restaurant lunch in the nearest city? There won't be many such luxuries for the young man on his way to war in the North African desert.

They have never shown her the mine, the diamond mine, although ever since she was a small child they have taken her to places of interest as part of her education. They must have talked about it—her father is a mining-company official himself, but his exploitation is gold, not precious stones—or more likely it has been cited in a general-knowledge text at school: some famous diamond was dug up there.

The camp is on part of the vast mine property, commandeered by the Defense Force. Over the veld there are tents to the horizon, roped and staked, dun as the scuffed and dried grass and the earth scoured by boots—boots tramping everywhere, khaki everywhere, the wearers replicating one another, him. Where will they find him? He did give a tent number. The numbers don't seem to be consecutive. Her father is called to a halt by a replica with a gun, slow-spoken and polite. The car follows given directions retained differently by the mother and the father; the car turns, backs up, take it slowly for heaven's sake.

She is the one: There. There he is.

Of course, when you find him you see that there is no one like him, no bewilderment. They are all laughing in the conventions of greeting, but his eyes have their concentrated attention for her. It is his greeting of the intervals between streetlights, and of the kitchen. This weekend that ends weekends seems also to be the first of winter; it's suddenly cold, wind bellies and whips at that tent where he must have slept, remote, between weekends. It's the weather for hot food, shelter. At the restaurant, he chooses curry and rice for this last meal. He sprinkles grated coconut and she catches his eye and he smiles for her as he adds dollops of chutney. The smile is that of a greedy boy caught out and is also as if it were a hand squeezed under the table. No wine—the father has to drive, and young men oughtn't to be encouraged to drink, enough of that in the Army—but there is ice cream with canned peaches, coffee served, and peppermints with the compliments of the management.


P. Steiner

"They decided on separate weddings."

It was too warm in the restaurant. Outside, high-altitude winds carry the breath of what must be early snow on the mountains, far away, unseen, as this drive back to the camp carries the breath of war, far away, unseen, where all the replicas in khaki are going to be shipped. No heating in the family car of those days, the soldier has only his thin, well-pressed khaki and the daughter, of course, like all young girls, has taken no precaution against a change in the weather—she is wearing the skimpy flounced cotton dress (secretly chosen, although he, being older, and a disciple of the sea's mysteries, probably won't even notice) that she was wearing the first time they walked to the cinema. The mother, concealing, she believes, irritation at the fecklessness of the young—next thing she'll have bronchitis and miss school—fortunately keeps a rug handy and insists that the passengers in the back seat put it over their knees.

It was easy to chat in the preoccupations of food along with the budgerigar chitter of other patrons in the restaurant. In the car, headed back for that final place, the camp, the outing is over. The father feels an obligation: at least, he can tell something about the diamond mine that's of interest, and soon they'll actually be passing the site of operations again, though you can't see much from the road.

The rug is like the pelt of some dusty pet animal settled over them. The warmth of the meal inside them is bringing it to life, a life they share, one body. It's pleasant to put their hands beneath it; the hands, his right, her left, find one another.

. . . *You know what a diamond is, of course, although you look at it as something pretty a woman wears on her finger, hmm? Well, actually it consists of pure carbon crystallized . . .*

He doesn't like to be interrupted, so there's no need to make any response, even if you still hear him. The right hand and the left hand become so tightly clasped that the pad of muscle at the base of each thumb is flattened against the bone and the interlaced fingers are jammed down between the joints. It isn't a clasp against imminent parting, it's got nothing to do with any future, it belongs in the urgent purity of this present.

. . . *The crystallization in regular octahedrons, that's to say eight-sided, and in allied forms and the cut and polished ones you see in jewelry more or less follow . . .*

The hands lay together, simply happened, on the skirt over her left thigh, because that is where she had slipped her hand beneath the woolly comfort of the rug. Now he slowly released, first fingers, then palms—at once awareness signalled between them that the rug was their tender accomplice, it must not be seen to be stirred by something—he released himself from her and for one bereft moment she thought he had left her behind, his eight-year advantage prevailed against such fusion of palms as it had done, so gently (oh, but why), when they were in the dark between trees, when they were in the kitchen.

. . . *colorless or they may be tinted occasionally yellow, pink, even black . . .*

The hand had not emerged from the rug. She followed as if her eyes were closed or she were in the dark; it went as if it were playing—looking for a place to tickle, as children do to make one another wriggle and laugh—where her skirt ended at her knee, going under her knee without displacing the skirt and touching the tendons and the hollow there. She didn't want to laugh (what would her father make of such a response to his knowledgeable commentary), so she glided her hand to his and put it back with hers where it had been before.

. . . *one of the biggest diamonds in the world after the Koh-i-noor's hundred and nine carats, but that was found in India . . .*

The hand, his hand, pressed fingers into her thigh through the cotton flounce, as if testing to see what was real about her, and stopped, and then out of the hesitation went down and, under the rug, up under the gauze of skirt, moved over her flesh. She did not look at him and he did not look at her.

. . . *and there are industrial gems you can cut glass with, make bits for certain drills, the hardest substance known . . .*

At the taut lip of her panties he hesitated again, no hurry, all something she was learning, he was teaching, the anticipation in his fingertips, he stroked along one of the veins in there in the delicate membranelike skin that is at the crevice between leg and body (like the skin that the sun on Maneuvers couldn't reach in the crook of his elbow), just before the hair begins. And then he went in under the elastic edge and his hand was soft on soft hair, his fingers like eyes attentive to her.

. . . *Look at this veld—nothing suggests one of the greatest ever, anywhere, down there, down in what we call Blue Earth, the diamondiferous core . . .*

She has no clear idea of where his hand is now, what she feels is that they are kissing, they are in each other's mouths although they cannot look at one another.

Are you asleep back there? The mother is remarking her own boredom with the mine. He is eight years older, able to speak: Just listening. His finger explores deep down in the dark, the hidden entrance to some sort of cave with its slippery walls and smooth stalagmite. She's found, he's found her.

The car is passing the mine processing plant.

. . . *product of the death and decay of forests millennia ago, just as coal is, but down there the ultimate alchemy, you might say . . .*

Those others, the parents, they have no way of knowing. It has happened, it is happening under the old woolly rug that was all they could provide for her. She is free of them. Found, and they don't know where she is.

At the camp, the father shakes the soldier's hand longer than in the usual grip. The mother for a moment looks as if she might give him a peck on the cheek, Godspeed, but it is not her way to be familiar.

Aren't you going to say goodbye? She's not a child, good heavens, a mother shouldn't have to remind of manners.

He's standing outside one of the tents with his hands hanging open at his sides as the car is driven away, and his attention is upon her until, with his furry narrowed sight, he'll cease to be able to make her out, while she can still see him, see him until he is made one with all the others in khaki, replicated, crossing and crowding, in preparation to embark.

If he had been killed in that war they would have heard through the grandmother's connections.

Is it still you, somewhere, old. ◆

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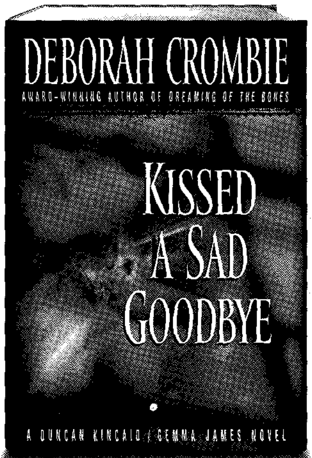
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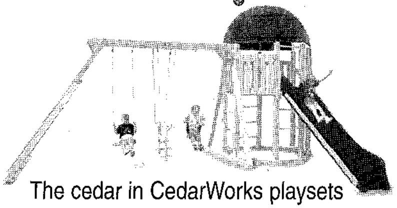

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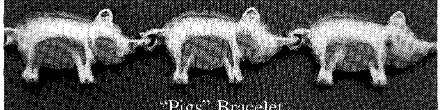

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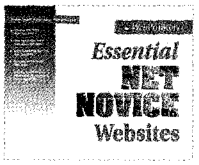

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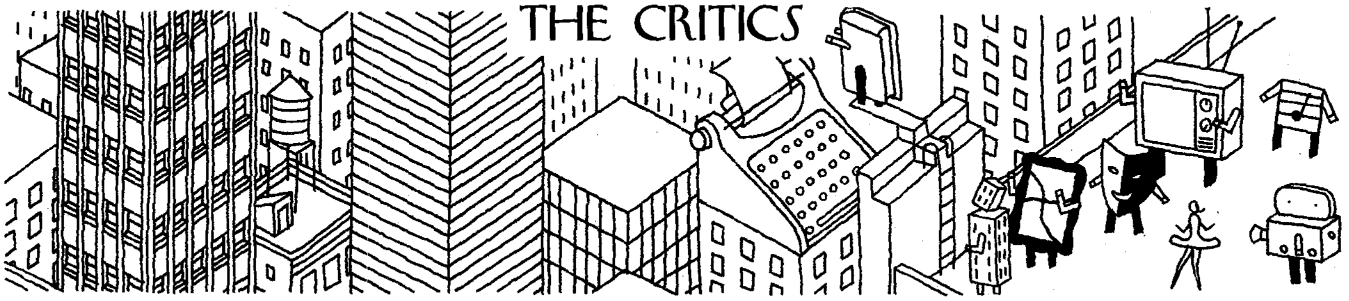


BOOKS

A THEORY OF EVERYTHING

Thomas Friedman goes global.

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

THOMAS FRIEDMAN'S first book, "From Beirut to Jerusalem," published ten years ago, was very much the work of a foreign correspondent: it was intensely, vividly situated in two countries that occupy adjoining small spaces. His second book, "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $27.50), is the work of a foreign-affairs columnist, which is what Friedman has been, at the *Times*, since 1995. It brings together the whole life of the world under a single idea, which is that the global economy, run by the American financial market, defines our age every bit as much as the Cold War defined the period between Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain speech, in 1946, and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. Just as Friedman himself now has to cover a lot of ground at the expense of a depth of particular knowledge, his premise is so sweeping that it pushes every local detail into conformance with it.

Last time around, Friedman, who writes in the first person, presented himself as a green, energetic middle-class kid from Minneapolis. Now he's a big shot: he operates inside a self-contained bubble of importance. His interviews are substantially with the world's top men, and are conducted on a statesman-to-statesman footing ("The Prime Minister laughed, but he knew just what I meant"), and the ordinary people he encounters are quite often service personnel, like street venders and hotel clerks. "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" is salted with information obtained in venues like airports, lecture-circuit gigs, a ski lift in the Rockies, and the Davos World Economic Forum. Friedman is nowhere near the empyrean level of pomposity that was achieved by his distinguished predecessor C. L. Sulzberger, but he ought to take care not to let the strong tidal force of his job pull him in its direction.

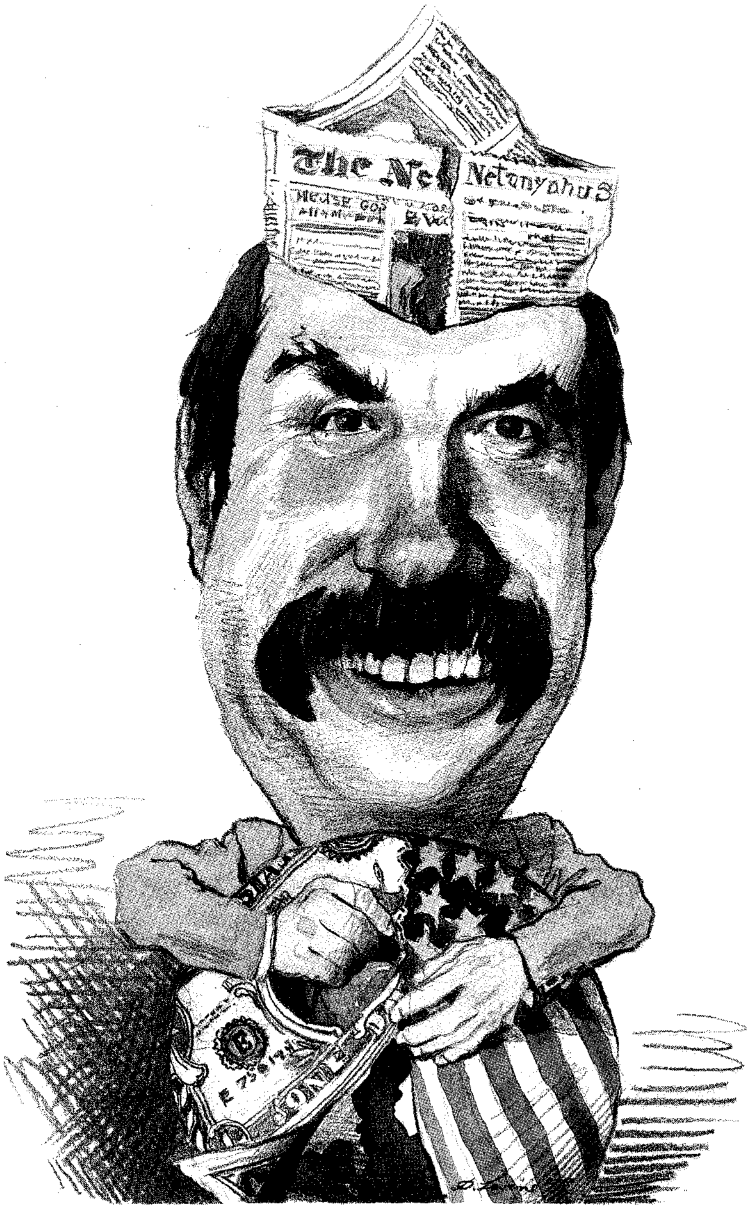
So far, however, Friedman has escaped the most serious occupational hazard for a writer on world affairs: the studiously airy, condescending, patrician tone. He may be hanging out with Them these days, but he's still on Our side. He has a born reporter's inextinguishable interest in everything, and a great sense of the telling detail. His experience of the world's societies may be broad and thin, yet he quite often finds a fresh, memorable nugget in service of his view that globalization is the "One Big Thing" in the world today. A Welsh soccer club has changed its name from Llansantffraid to Total Network Solutions in return for a big contribution from a cellular-phone company. Thailand is the world's second-largest manufacturer of pickup trucks. Steve Kerr, of the Chicago Bulls, visited the Tokyo fish market at five in the morning and found himself mobbed by fans.

Friedman's repertoire of tropes includes the coining of catchy neologisms ("glocalism," "DOScapital 6.0"), epigrams ("If you want to save the Amazon, go to business school and learn how to do a deal"), and rules, such as his famous dictum, now superseded by events in Serbia, that no two countries with McDonald's franchises have ever gone to war with each other. He also likes to make early Clint Eastwood-style pronunciamentos: "Inefficient firms and banks are going to have to be taken out and shot and their dead capital transferred to more efficient firms." He imagines folksy conversations between world leaders: "Hafez, you are destined to be roadkill," he has Warren Christopher, as Secretary of State, telling the President of Syria. He always tries to simplify. Here he is on the Asian financial crisis:

> Have you ever seen what happens when you use an old, slow version of the DOS operating system and Windows software in a new Pentium II computer? What happens is that you get messages on your screen, such as "You Have Performed an Illegal Function," "Out of Memory" and "Cannot Save Item." This, in short, is what happened to the Southeast Asians in 1997-98, only the messages that came up on their screens read: "You Have Performed a Series of Irrational Investments. Cannot Save Items. Delete Memory of All Inefficient Industries. Contact Service Provider and Download New Software and Operating System."

THE over-all argument in "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" is as simple, dramatic, and relentless as the writing. The knitting together of the world, with economic forces as the main agent, is now proceeding with a rapidity and a completeness that were heretofore unimagined. Just about everything happening everywhere is a consequence of it: "Globalization is not a phenomenon. It is not just some passing trend. Today it is the overarching international system shaping the domestic politics and foreign relations of virtually every country." Although the dominance of globalization is a by-product of the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the only superpower, Friedman thinks that to understand it as a political development propelled by governments would be unhelpful. Instead, the key actor is what he calls "the Electronic Herd," a network of people who work in super-reactive financial markets and multinational corporations. The Herd demands, in effect, that every country put on a "Golden Straitjacket"—a set of government policies that include stable prices and currency, deregulation, privatization, balanced budgets, and minimal restrictions on investment and trade. No Golden Straitjacket means no foreign investment, and therefore much less prosperity and an unhappy, politically restive populace.

The title of Friedman's book is a symbolic rendering of the struggle between the global-economic (that's the Lexus) and the local-historical (that's the olive tree). But the implication of a balance is a bit misleading, because to Friedman's mind the two sides are not engaged in any ongoing, unresolvable conflict. The Lexus is going to win—if it hasn't won already. A series of beliefs—religious fundamentalism, anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, cultural traditionalism—may stand against it, but any backlash will be overpowered by the "groundswell" of popular desire for globalization's benefits, which include higher incomes, access to popular culture, and, specifically, Friedman's favorite emblem, McDonald's.



Globalization heralds the triumph of a system and a country, ours.

Friedman does sound a few cautionary notes. Economically backward nations, like Russia, China, and Brazil, might wind up wholly opposed to globalization, and "in almost every country that has put on the Golden Straitjacket you have at least one populist party or major candidate who is running all the time against globalization." And extreme inequalities of income within nations "could turn out to be globalization's Achilles' heels" by generating social unrest at a level that threatens the stability of their governments. Mainly, though, Friedman sees globalization as being relatively immune to conventional political opposition. During the Cold War, economically inefficient, olive-tree regimes were able to survive indefinitely on handouts from the United States and the Soviet Union; now they have to get with the program or go broke, which is what explains, for example, the Palestine Liberation Organization's move toward the center in the nineteen-nineties.

Even conventional warfare is likely to wither away, in Friedman's view, because it is economically irrational. His typically uninflected allegiance to this belief is what led him to write the following now embarrassing sentence: "Instead of getting drawn into regional conflicts, such as Bosnia, Rwanda, Liberia, Algeria or Kosovo, today's great powers prefer to try to build iron curtains around these civil conflicts, and drive around them as though they were bad neighborhoods." The only threat to the new order that Friedman really takes seriously is that of "the Super-Empowered Angry Man"—someone like Osama bin Laden, the rich Saudi terrorist, who combines a deep-seated hostility to globalization with an ability to take full advantage of the prosperity and the dramatically opened access to advanced technology (especially nuclear weapons) that it has wrought.

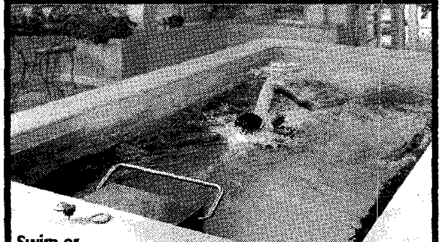
Globalization may have put Wall Street in charge, but that doesn't mean that it is a pure-market, libertarian force in the countries it affects. Capital craves stability: it requires court systems and honest governments and other reliable social structures, which Friedman lumps together under the term "software." In a global economy, he says, "the quality of your state matters more, not less" even though the state is constrained by the Electronic Herd to operate within a quite narrow ideological range. He sees a business-friendly moderate liberalism, which for purely practical reasons does nice things for needy people, as the almost foreordained form of governance everywhere.

FRIEDMAN'S main point is hardly original. Dividing the world into traditional societies, which run according to custom and faith, and modern societies, which run according to law and economics, and then predicting the triumph of the modern ones is an exercise that dates back at least to the publication of "Community and Society," by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, in 1887, or even to "Ancient Law," by the English legal scholar Sir Henry James Sumner Maine, in 1861. The more specific idea of a global economy isn't new, either. As several economists—most notably Jeffrey Williamson, of Harvard University—have written recently, international trade increased dramatically between 1850 and the First World War. Williamson goes on to point out that one consequence of this earlier period of globalization was that governments retreated into policies of severe trade and immigration restrictions. The subsequent period of autarky (great word!), which ended not long ago, covered the Great Depression, both World Wars, and the onset of the Cold War. Unlike Friedman, Williamson sees the political impetus to restrict globalization as being fully the match of the economic impetus to expand it.

During the last few years, we have had a flood of books and articles on globalization. Friedman is too casual for footnotes or a "review of the literature" (although he should have mentioned Benjamin R. Barber's similarly titled "Jihad vs. McWorld," which was published three years ago), but he's easy to place among writers on the subject. Economists discuss globalization as a matter of capital, wages, trade, and migration; Friedman sees it as an economically powered phenomenon, but one that requires an undergirding of military power ("McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas") and imposes a particular political template and a standard popular culture on every participating country. His is a theory of everything.

Friedman is also probably the most sanguine of the major writers on globalization. He isn't as worried about its effect on ordinary people's wages as William Greider was in "One World, Ready or Not," because he takes the classical economist's position that the decrease in absolute poverty produced by free trade outweighs the increase in relative inequality. He doesn't share Benjamin Barber's concern that the Lexus side of the Lexus/olive-tree equation is profoundly threatening to civil society, because he believes that the market will insist upon a strengthening of civil society in order to protect investment. He doesn't find the olive tree's forces to be as powerful, and therefore as perilous, as Robert D. Kaplan did in "Balkan Ghosts" or "The Ends of the Earth." (Friedman writes, "The great issues of identity politics and self-determination are becoming fewer and fewer these days.") He is less alarmed than Jeffrey Williamson about the possibility of an outbreak of protectionism, partly because he thinks that personal computers and the Internet will make it difficult to reverse the unimpeded, instantaneous flow of money around the world. Friedman is a globalization triumphalist.

He is quick to stipulate, too, that the triumph is not just of a particular form of social and economic organization but of a particular country, ours. As one of his interview subjects puts it, "Globalization is Americanization." We already dominate the world in almost every sense, and we will continue to do so, and to Friedman that's great. "America truly is the ultimate benign hegemon," he declares. We could use some touching up: Friedman calls for crime control, gun control, campaign-finance reform, and improvement of the public schools, though this agenda is presented very briefly, in the spirit of the to-be-sure paragraph in an op-ed piece. In more detail, and with more feeling, he proposes a Rapid Change Opportunity Act to take some of the sting out of globalization for ordinary people, but its underlying purpose would be to push the process along, not to slow it down. On the whole, he sees our society as being almost miraculously well designed and smoothly functioning: "It's a post-industrial world, and America today is good at everything that is postindustrial." He seems to regard just about



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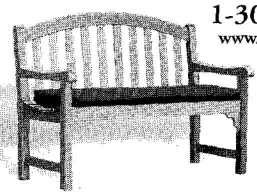

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every topic earnestly worried over in the national discourse—immigration, inequality, racism, violence—with the impatience of somebody who spends most of his reporting time in places that would love to have our problems. "In America," Friedman proclaims, with jarring facility, "lose your job in Maine one day and, if one is available, you can get a new one in San Diego the next day. . . . America is a country where the minute one person stands up and says, 'that's impossible,' someone else walks in the door and announces, 'We just did it.' "

Being a reporter gives you a special visa with which you can exit the perspective that comes with your situation and achieve a state of absolute, frictionless total awareness. That's the ideal, anyway; nobody fully achieves it. The perceptions of even a reporter as good as Friedman are limited by the prejudices of his informants. As Friedman trots around the globe, he keeps most intensively in touch with one subculture, that of international finance—the corner inhabited by Treasury ministers and investment bankers and macroeconomists and hedge-fund managers. "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" feels like an unusually frank version of their take on the state of the world today: every place that operates the way we think places should is thriving, and every place that doesn't is doomed.

It's noteworthy that a big book by the foreign-affairs columnist of the *Times* hardly mentions the State Department. The Treasury and the Federal Reserve are treated here as the government's only international players who really matter (and Lawrence Summers, the economist who is Deputy Treasury Secretary, is probably Friedman's most frequently and respectfully quoted source). Friedman is so financially oriented that the analogy between national governments and corporations comes naturally to him. He writes that linking your country up with the global economy is "like turning your country into a public company with shareholders all over the world . . . Citizens are behaving more like shareholders, leaders more like management and foreign-policy analysts more like credit-rating agencies." One chapter of the book describes the "Eight Habits of Highly Effective Countries," as if those countries were businesses, and it is even written in the high-tech boosterese of an article in *Wired* or *Fast Company*.

When Friedman is abroad, interviewing heads of state, he comes across as being impossible to bullshit. In the business world, he's much more credulous. He lets executives get away with such sloganeering as "Chevron is not an oil company, it's a learning company." He seems to be in awe of the abilities of businessmen, as he most definitely is not awed by the abilities of politicians.

The lack of skepticism toward business—the tendency to adopt its view of the world—has a deeper effect on Friedman than just causing him on occasion to strike a tonally false note. He treats business success as a matter of winning—a pure contest of brains, speed, and skill—and he doesn't notice the inhibiting structures that corporations create to confer special advantage on themselves. For example, in the early nineteen-eighties I.B.M. developed its enormously influential personal computer, and decided first to contract out and grant copyright for the design of the operating system to another company (Microsoft), and then to make the hardware specifications publicly available, so that other companies (the first of which was Compaq) would adopt them. As a result, I.B.M., having created the industry standard in personal computing, ended up as only the fourth or fifth most important company in the industry. Friedman trustingly quotes the C.E.O. of Compaq (a man since fired for poor performance), who told him that I.B.M. "was still working on the slow Cold War business paradigm" and was therefore beaten by tougher, leaner players. Actually, I.B.M. should have been more Cold War: it should have bought the operating system from Microsoft (as Microsoft bought it from another company) and kept its hardware design secret. If it had, there would be no Microsoft and no Compaq today. Instead, Microsoft looks awfully like a monopoly that, as we've learned from its antitrust trial, forces Compaq to load its operating system onto every computer it sells. In the era of globalization, businesses can constrict freedom and innovation just as governments did during the Cold War.

Instead of seeing government as a

BRIEFLY NOTED

Little Green Men, by Christopher Buckley (Random House; $24.95). Buckley takes two subjects that might have seemed beyond parody by now—weekend political chat shows and abduction by aliens—and whips them into a fine comic confection. Our hero, Washington TV host and power-Wasp Jack Banion, finds his life turned upside down when he is kidnapped and summarily probed by a couple of tall, Nordic-type space invaders on the fourth hole at Burning Bush Country Club. (They are not real aliens, of course; they're government operatives in stretchy bodysuits.) Banion is endearing in his imperious, Princetonian way, and Buckley's satire is similarly poised—always sharp but never sour.

Alma Mahler-Werfel: Diaries 1898-1902, selected and translated by Antony Beaumont (Cornell; $35). Why did Alma Schindler (1879-1964), the beautiful and musically gifted daughter of a well-connected Austrian landscape painter, marry Gustav Mahler, who demanded that she stop composing? Alma flirted with several of Vienna's most brilliant artists, and her diaries, which conclude with her engagement, are as enjoyable for their savvy artistic observations as for their sometimes racy sexuality. Beaumont's selections reveal a young woman with an iron will (she pulled her own molar) who nevertheless craved a submissive role. If her genius husband brought Western music to the edge of modernism, Alma seems balanced on the brink of the modern age—a combination of proto-feminist and femme fatale.

The Making of the Masters, by David Owen (Simon & Schuster; $25). In 1933, an abandoned nursery outside Augusta, Georgia, became the Augusta National Golf Club, where the Masters, golf's most glamorous tournament, takes place each year. The club is as bedecked with mythology as it is with blossoms, and Owen, in this lively history, cheerfully debunks cherished legends—that the co-founder and first chairman Clifford Roberts was a heartless tyrant; that Bobby Jones, one of the century's greatest athletes, was the architect of the "World's Wonder Inland Golf Course"—and dismisses fears that Augusta National, delicious to look at, thorny to conquer, will ever become obsolete.

Waiting for Aphrodite, by Sue Hubbell (Houghton Mifflin; $24).These essays on natural history discuss everything from the orange-humped crickets that are unique to Missouri and the iridescent butterflies of Costa Rica to the furry sea mice that live in the coastal waters near the writer's new house, in Maine. Hubbell is both a delighted home scientist and a glinting memoirist, and her observations are interspersed with accounts of her fresh life in the East. She also digests and recycles Aristotle on sea urchins, Darwin on vegetable mold, "Beowulf," and an earthworm cookbook.

countervailing force to the market, Friedman sees the market as too powerful to be countervailed, and government's role as being to help the market function more smoothly. Business itself—or, at least, purely economic incentive structures set up by international organizations—can solve many public problems on its own. Friedman points out, somewhat wickedly but accurately, that the reason the South of France has remained picturesque is that the Germans, through the European Union, subsidize French family farmers. What capitalism might destroy can be saved mainly by such means, or through the private philanthropy of enlightened moneyed interests. A nonprofit organization called Conservation International, which is funded by Ford and other corporations, takes Friedman on a tour of a Brazilian wetland that it is preserving, and he concludes, "If that's what it takes to save this incredibly beautiful ecosystem and way of life, then God bless Henry Ford and the Internet."

Although the sheer force of Friedman's writing personality makes what he says sound convincing, his sense of inevitability—of there being one economic and political model that will always win—is the characteristic view of the leading citizens of a powerful nation during prosperous and expansive times. A couple of weeks ago, however, *The Economist* published figures showing that over the past ten years productivity has been growing faster in protectionist Japan and in social-democratic Germany than in the United States. It's always dangerous to predict the future, as Friedman does, simply by extending the trend line of the present infinitely forward. No matter how rapid the pace of change, how transformative the new technology, how inarguable the logic of peace and progress, in the past some combination of, at worst, wrongheadedness and, at best, variety has always risen up to undo the order so well established that it looked like natural law.

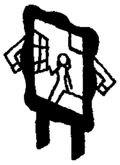
Every work of journalism that attempts to explain its era runs the risk of appearing within a few years to be as much a document testifying to what people believed at the time it was written as an actual description of conditions. Let's hope that in the long run "The Lexus and the Olive Tree" turns out to be a brightly colored landscape rendering of the outset of a happy age rather than a specimen of millennial American hubris. ♦

THE ART WORLD

EUROSPLASH

Art to the rescue, in Berlin and London.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



THE once and future center of Berlin still brims with darkness at night, though it is riddled with points of light from many, many construction sites. This immense expanse of prime real estate, whose bombed remains were split by the Wall until less than ten years ago, goes comatose after quitting time. So I was stunned last month when, from a taxi passing the great glass box of Mies van der Rohe's New National Gallery, I suddenly beheld a vast, dazzling image on a movie screen inside the building. It was a frame from John Ford's "The Searchers" (in which John Wayne spends five years trying to find a kidnapped young girl, who turns out to be Natalie Wood). The Scottish video artist Douglas Gordon, a thirty-three-year-old superstar on the international art circuit, who makes spectacular use of old films, has timed his projection of the movie to run around the clock, at about fifteen minutes per frame, for five years.

"In five years" is how Berliners regularly preface predictions about their city, adding, "Of course, it will take five

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years." The Gordon installation was temporary and, as a work, was not specifically intended for Berlin. It bespeaks a development in recent art practically everywhere: invasion of the museum by popular culture. But wouldn't it be terrific if the last shot of "The Searchers"—Wayne silhouetted in a dark doorway against a sun-maddened desert landscape—addressed the night on Potsdamer Strasse in 2004? Berlin will by then have emerged as the Emerald City of twenty-first-century Europe, or perhaps as an urban debacle of epic scope. Confident prophets of both outcomes abound locally. In either event, Gordon's slickly ambiguous gesture would contribute an apt irony: triumph and loss are twin themes of "The Searchers."

Turn-of-the-millennium artists are good at deferring meaning to the future. This is new. Modern artists used to make propositions for and about—and occasionally against—things to come. Their disillusioned heirs prefer open-ended stratagems that make poetry of sheer uncertainty. This is notably so in Europe, where I've just prowled the art worlds of London and Berlin. I have trends for you: video in London, and furniture—or "furniture"—in Berlin. I'll start with Berlin, which is, as always, a ground zero of extremes.

As viewed through recent art, the European present feels frankly—and even ecstatically—clueless. Meanwhile, Berlin has no present whatsoever, any way you look at it. A looming future and a crushing past overlap the place. People on the street, including oneself, seem like blurs in an accidental photograph. The concerns of any given day become contingent, subjunctive, fluky. History circles. Never mind the much bruited new Berlin architecture, which, on the whole, is sadly unimaginative and beside the main point. What matters is who and what will go into the uninteresting buildings when they are built. The people who will decide the reborn city's character and style may not have arrived yet.

An underpopulated, skeleton-crew air—beneath forests of cranes that look like horizon-to-horizon question marks—permeates what used to be East Berlin. (The former West Berlin endures as a lively European Anywheresville.) Right now, the happening neighborhood is the Mitte—the midtown of old Berlin, just east of the Brandenburg Gate and of the sportily glass-capped, rehabilitated Reichstag. Crossed by the magnificent boulevard of Unter den Linden and the wannabe Fifth Avenue of Friedrichstrasse, which meet near an outpost of Thomas Krens's planetary Guggenheim Museum empire, the Mitte has come a long way from the squatters' paradise that it turned into during the post-Wall early nineties. (Ask any of the city's tragically nostalgic thirty-year-olds, with their sacred memories of techno-raves in dripping ruins.) But the area's zesty cafés and fresh-plaster-smelling renovations are like stage sets waiting for the show to start.

During a tour of the Mitte's galleries—whose pristine and breezily styled storefronts and courtyard spaces appear to be influenced as much by Los Angeles as by New York or London—I insulted the intellectual dignity of several dealers with one ques-

Douglas Gordon's video installation of "The Searchers" at the New National Gallery in Berlin: Triumph and loss.

SPINACH - THE PREQUEL
MUELLER

tion: Won't moneyed newcomers with empty apartments determine the next developments in Berlin art? The dealers greeted the thought with contempt, but the work they had put on view often confirmed my suspicions. One young artist after another proved to be brainstorming in the vicinities of architecture, design, and decoration. For example, Plamen Dejanov, a Bulgarian artist, and Swetlana Heger, a Czech, personally collect oddments of aching contemporary chic—a Vetreria Vistosi lamp, a Frank Gehry table, a Karen Kilimnik drawing—and array them on platforms as if they were in a museum of the future. With more grit, Bettina Allamoda saws up a ghastly old East German mural and incorporates slabs of it into a suite of rough furniture—a remarkably direct illustration of "living with the past." Art that bears on the life-style choices of yuppies lacks gravitas, you could say, but, at least, it's focussed. A city can do worse, on the map of world culture, than become a laboratory of domestic aesthetics. Might the new Berlin Republic gestate some extensive neobourgeois sensibility—ready or not, a New Biedermeier?

"That'll be the day," John Wayne keeps muttering in "The Searchers" when he is faced with unwelcome portents, which threaten his character's rigidly principled Old West. Curators and other sinecured intellectuals of the European contemporary-art establishment become similarly testy about the influences of commerce and pop culture in today's equivalent of an avant-garde. Europe's Lady Bountiful agencies of tax-funded high culture, whose largesse continues to be staggering by American standards, are leaking juice intellectually. In Berlin, where artistic life was long sustained intravenously by huge cultural bureaucracies on both sides of the Wall, a privatizing mood has arrived. A shining example of pitilessly abrupt out-of-dateness is the palatial contemporary museum in the Hamburger Bahnhof. The former railway station's installations of colossal works by institutional paladins of the last thirty years—Warhol, Beuys, and Kiefer, at best, and a familiar roster of orotund mediocrities, at worst—embarrass with their churchy tone. The furniture work and other toughly modest stuff in the galleries—including

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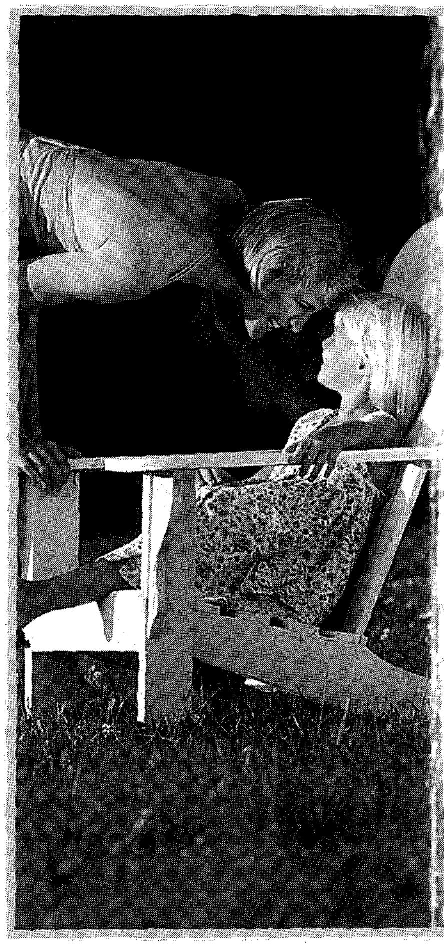
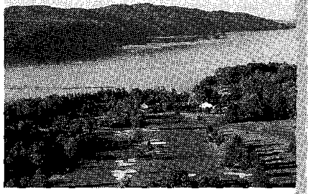
much old-fashioned but new-spirited painting—points to a lighter, sassier, nonchalantly blasphemous future for Berlin art.

When I was in London, the inescapable Douglas Gordon was about to première a video piece that features an orchestra conductor leading a performance of the Bernard Herrmann score for "Vertigo." I had left, behind me in New York, two Gordon shows, one of which included a variably synchronized two-screen projection, at the downtown Gagosian Gallery, of the "You talkin' to me?" scene from "Taxi Driver." Gordon annoys me. His crashingly canonical taste in movies and his smarty-pants syntheses of time-based installational genres—Bruce Nauman meets Philip Glass at the Film Forum—all too smoothly solve a contemporary curator's need to beguile crowds while asserting virtuous cutting-edginess. But there is no denying that Gordon exactly defines, on a large scale, terms of form and content that are shared by less heralded but more absorbing current artists, especially in London.

Britain's recurring forte in contemporary culture, which is, roughly speaking, to theatricalize the hell out of it, blazed up a few years ago in a rousing scene led by the artist and all-around doyen Damien Hirst—he of, among other things, variously displayed animal corpses. With concatenating shock tactics suited to British journalism's daily appetite for outrage, the scene made for a merry rumpus of cheeky aesthetes and barking philistines. The spectacle flopped in New York, where it looked like a replay, as farce, of our own nineteen-eighties. (Then there's the fact that to crack the tabloids in America an art work has to fall on somebody or otherwise spin off a lawsuit.) The hype about the Young Brits has pretty much run its course in London, now that Hirst and his gang—including the bad girl's bad girl Sarah Lucas, whose sex jokes in many mediums are scurrilous and elegant—are comfortably ensconced in the Tate Gallery.

The Hirst eruption's lasting contribution to British culture was to hollow out a space for less frenetic but seriously energetic newcomers. See Lon-





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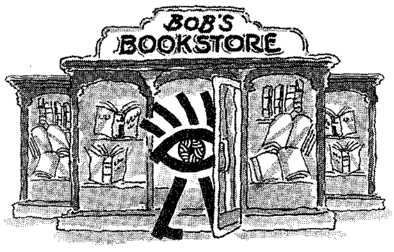

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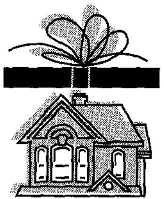

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don's hip and hardworking art magazine *Frieze* for regular updates on the scene as a floating research project: it specializes in crossover uses of television, photography, design, and pop music. The situation plays to the British knack for classing up creative vernaculars from elsewhere. (You've heard of the Beatles.) Like Gordon, but in ways that are less complacently mandarin, several young English video artists are addressing the ever more peremptory demand of our time that art justify itself as entertainment. My favorites in this line are the Wilson twins, Jane and Louise, who, shooting on film and transferring the results to video, bring gorgeous production values to handheld tours of such sinister historic sites as the abandoned nuclear-missile base at Greenham Common and the former headquarters of the East German Stasi, in Berlin. Spectacular and dire, the Wilsons' immersive installations pioneer a grave and exciting, breathtakingly lonesome brand of walk-in theatre.

Of course, theatricality seems to be a growth stock in the art industry everywhere, given the rise of institutions like the new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and, in London, the stupendous new Tate Gallery of Modern Art, which is due to open a year from now in a former power plant at Bankside. (The old Tate will then subside into being a home for British art.) I was taken on a hard-hat inspection of that edifice's pharaonic spaces, which will require the attendance of a few thousand people at a time in order not to feel deserted. The building faces St. Paul's Cathedral, across the Thames, in a sisterly fashion that will provide thematic fodder for lots of journalists, starting with me. All over the world, art museums are reviving the medieval mandate of the cathedral as a civic center where citizens come together en masse to be alone with themselves. Is this holy function too much to ask of mere art? It sure is, and I expect that really intelligent new work will duly mock such expectations even as it feigns to satisfy them. Not since the early, suckerish days of a bourgeoisie that caught the brunt of Dada and Surrealism have congenitally ungrateful artists been presented with so large and luscious a hand to bite. ♦

NOTEBOOK

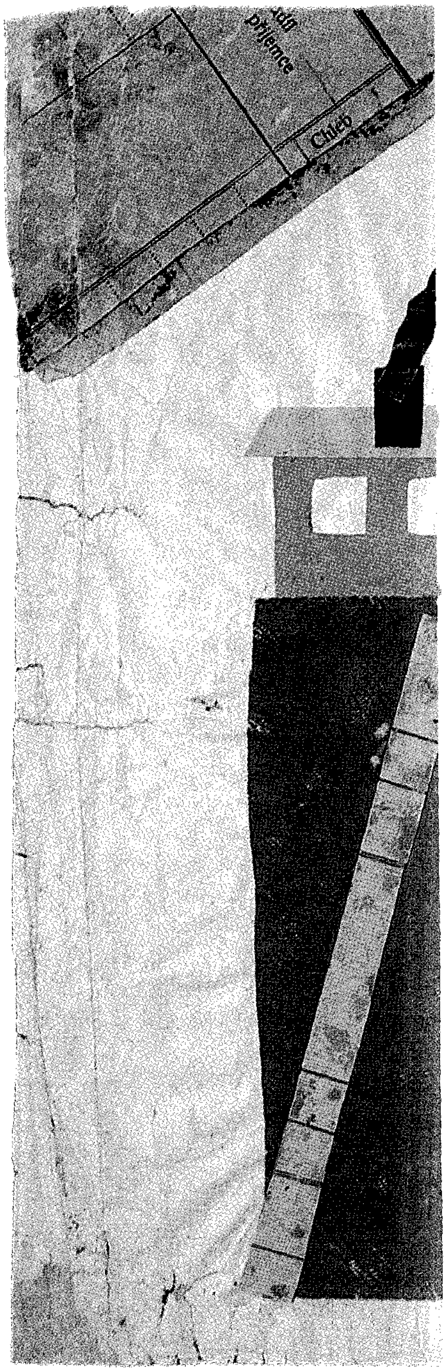
SUCH WAS THEIR WAGER

During the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, thousands of European Jews were imprisoned at Terezín, a small garrison town thirty miles northwest of Prague. For the Nazis, Theresienstadt (the town's old Austrian name) served, among other things, as a "model ghetto," a kind of Potemkin village for viewing by the Red Cross and other relief organizations. Official visitors to the camp were shown cafés, playgrounds, and sports facilities, and musical performances were staged for them. But real conditions were far from model. More than fifty thousand people were kept in quarters intended for seven thousand, disease was widespread, and food was scarce. Although it was not an extermination camp as such, the mortality rate was high—thirty-three thousand people died there, mostly of disease or malnutrition—and the prisoners lived in constant fear of transports to the East. Of the more than a hundred and forty thousand people brought to Theresienstadt between November, 1941, and April, 1945, over eighty-eight thousand were sent to their death in Auschwitz and other camps. Some of Europe's most gifted artists, musicians, composers, and writers were held at Theresienstadt, and they managed to sustain a remarkable underground cultural community. The art produced there is the subject of an exhibition at the Centre d'Histoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation in Lyons, France, for which the Czech-born novelist Milan Kundera reflected on the camp's legacy.

BY MILAN KUNDERA

As an adolescent, a year or two after the war, I met a young Jewish couple about five years older than I; they had spent their youth first at Theresienstadt and then at another camp. I felt intimidated by what had befallen them, their suffering, which was beyond my grasp. My discomfort annoyed them—"Stop that! Stop!"—and they insisted I see that life in that place had kept all its diversity, with comedy as well as sorrow, tenderness as well as horror. Out of their love for life, they refused to be transformed into legend, into a monument to misfortune, into another document in the black book of Nazism. I have lost all sight of them since, but I have often thought about what they were trying to make me understand.

Jews from Central Europe, particularly from the Austro-Czech part of it, came together at Theresienstadt. I have known or met a number of them: my Aunt Sonia, herself not Jewish, who made several clandestine visits to her Jewish lover there, until the day she



"Paysage avec Trois Maisons" ("Lands

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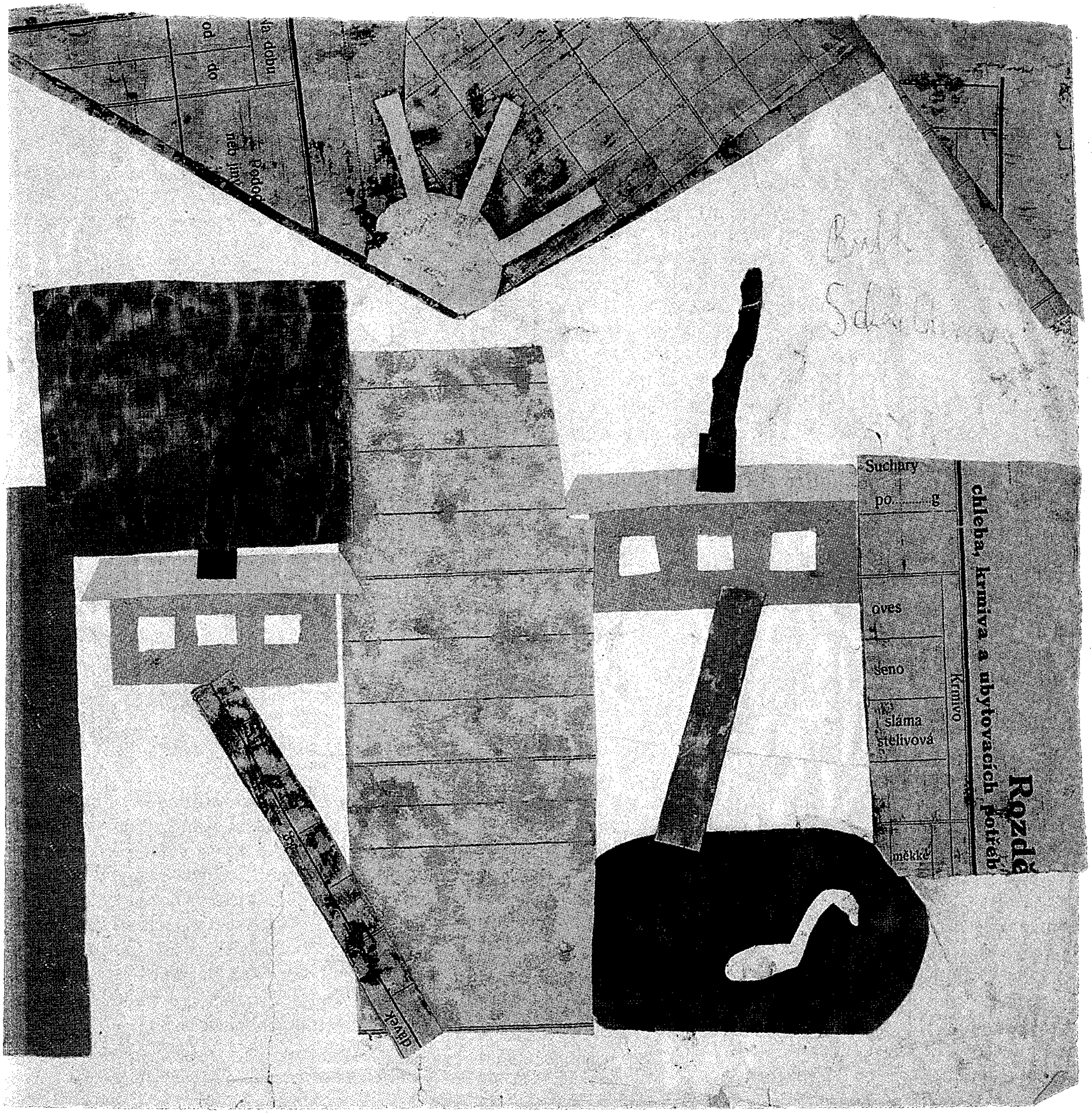
was caught and sent to die at Auschwitz; Pavel Haas, a composer I adored; another composer, the very young Gideon Klein, who wrote almost all his work at Theresienstadt and who did not survive; Karel Ančerl, one of the greatest postwar conductors; Karel Poláček, a novelist to whose curious Czech Jewish humor I feel indebted. Alfred Radok, the finest director I've ever known, was spared Theresienstadt, but his whole family passed through there; he later recounted the Holocaust in the enormously poetic "Distant Journey," a film that shook my entire generation after the war.

It is not only the art created at Theresienstadt that leaves us awestruck; perhaps even more it is that thirst for cultural life, that thirst for art displayed by the members of the Theresienstadt community, who in dreadful circumstances still attended plays and concerts and exhibitions. What was art for them? A way of claiming the full array of emotions, of ideas, of sensations, so that life should not be reduced to the single dimension of horror. And for the artists? Inevitably, they saw their fate as entwined with the fate of modern art—called "degenerate," hunted down, ridiculed, condemned to death. I consider one of their concert posters: on the program are Mahler, Zemlinsky, Schoenberg, Hába. The condemned playing condemned music.

For it is crucial to grasp this: In the first half of this century, Central Europe had a predominant role in the evolution of art and of thought—Freud and psy-



Three Houses"), a collage by Ruth Schächterová, a Theresienstadt prisoner who died in 1944, at the age of fourteen.

choanalysis; Gustav Mahler stretching a bridge from Romanticism to modernity; Wittgenstein, Schoenberg, and the Viennese school; the structuralism born in Prague with Mukarovsky and Jakobson; Kafka, Musil, Gombrowicz, Broch discovering a modern aesthetic for the art of the novel. More than half of those I have named were Jewish. The blow visited on the Jews of Central Europe also struck the heart of European culture. The destiny that, in the confusion of the last days of the war, sent the very ill Robert Desnos to Theresienstadt to die has the import of a metaphor: the great Surrealist poet went to meet his death in the town that became—to borrow Paul Éluard's words—modern art's "capital of sorrow."

Now, in the last days of a century that hopes to settle accounts with itself, I hear the word "memory" pronounced in tones of pathos. But I wonder whether we haven't distorted the notion, reducing it to nothing more than an incriminatory form of memory, memory whose sole purpose is punishment. One day, when I was discussing this with a friend, I asked him a trick question: "And do you know 'A Survivor from Warsaw'?" He had no idea what I was talking about. Yet "A Survivor from Warsaw," Arnold Schoenberg's cantata, is the greatest musical monument to the Holocaust. People fight to insure that the murderers not be forgotten—and then forget Schoenberg.

The Jews of Theresienstadt had no illusions: they were living in the antechamber of death while Nazi propaganda paraded their cultural life as an alibi. Should this have persuaded them to refuse their unreliable and exploited liberty? The response was utterly clear. Their lives, their creations, their exhibitions, their string quartets, their loves: the whole array of their life was incomparably more important than the macabre theatre of their jailers. Such was their wager. It should be ours. Horrible crimes will be committed as long as mankind endures. What's unique, though, and will never be repeated is the work the European Jews created in the course of this century, which they carried through the hell of this century, and without which Europe—its art, its thought, its very existence—would not be what it is. ♦

(Translated, from the French, by Linda Asher.)

THE WAYWARD PRESS

HUMOR PAPER READ, PRAISED

Based in Midwest, named after vegetable, deemed funny anyway.

BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG

THE Clinton-Lewinsky imbroglio was such a gusher of easy laughs that, as we all know, it produced a crisis of overproduction in the humor industry. Against that background, the restraint shown by *The Onion*, a mock newspaper that is the country's most interesting satiric publication, was instructive. Even though *The Onion* is a weekly, it led with the scandal only twice. Its top story at the height of the impeachment trial was LEWINSKY SUBPOENAED TO RE-BLOW CLINTON ON SENATE FLOOR—a nice summation of what the scandal was "about," but by *Onion* standards a little formulaic, a little da-dum. More *Onion*-y—that is, more oblique and studiously goofy—was this, which came out six months earlier:

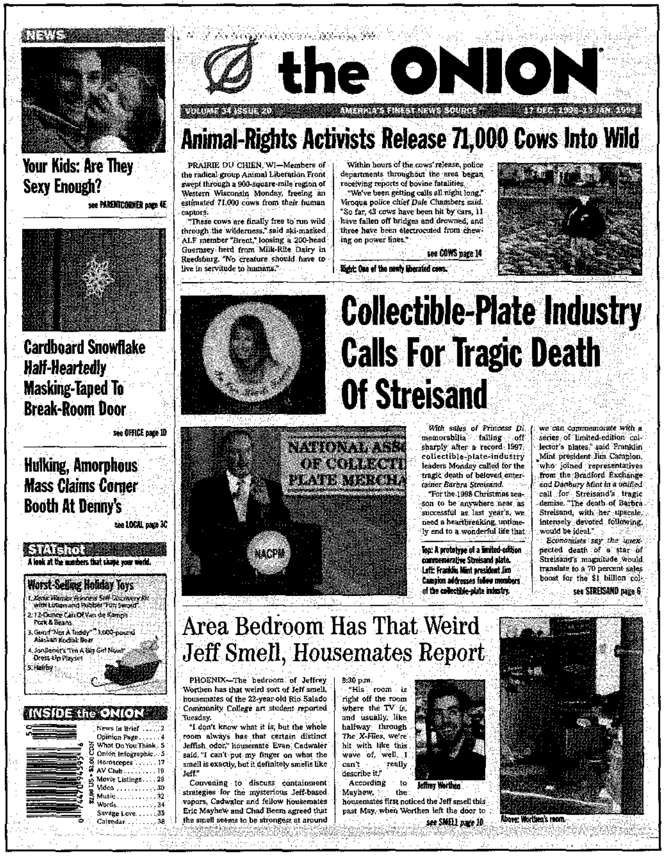
CLINTON CHASTISES HILLARY FOR FAILURE TO PRODUCE MALE HEIR

WASHINGTON, DC—With less than two years remaining in his second term, Bill Clinton publicly chastised First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton Monday for failing to provide him with a male child to assume the presidency upon his leaving office.

"As my tenure as president enters its twilight, my wish for a male heir remains unfulfilled," Clinton told reporters at a White House press conference. "Unless my wife Hillary bears me a son in the next 17 months, the glorious eight-year reign of the Clintons will come to an end."

"Hillary, I rebuke you and your unfruitful womb," Clinton said. "The House Of Clinton must not be allowed to fall."

And so on, for eight more paragraphs.



NEWS

Your Kids: Are They Sexy Enough?

see PARENTCORNER page 4E

Cardboard Snowflake Half-Heartedly Masking-Taped To Break-Room Door

see OFFICE page 1D

Hulking, Amorphous Mass Claims Corner Booth At Denny's

see LOCAL page 3C

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Animal-Rights Activists Release 71,000 Cows Into Wild

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WI—Members of the radical group Animal Liberation Front swept through a 900-square-mile region of Western Wisconsin Monday, freeing an estimated 71,000 cows from their human captors.

"These cows are finally free to run wild through the wilderness," said ski-masked ALF member "Brent," loosing a 200-head Guernsey herd from Milk-Rite Dairy in Reedsburg. "No creature should have to live in servitude to humans."

Within hours of the cows' release, police departments throughout the area began receiving reports of bovine fatalities.

"We've been getting calls all night long," Viroqua police chief Dale Chambers said. "So far, 43 cows have been hit by cars, 11 have fallen off bridges and drowned, and three have been electrocuted from chewing on power lines."

see COWS page 14

Right: One of the newly liberated cows.

Collectible-Plate Industry Calls For Tragic Death Of Streisand

With sales of Princess Di memorabilia falling off sharply after a record 1997, collectible-plate-industry leaders Monday called for the tragic death of beloved entertainer *Barbra Streisand*.

"For the 1998 Christmas season to be anywhere near as successful as last year's, we need a heartbreaking, untimely end to a wonderful life that we can commemorate with a series of limited-edition collector's plates," said Franklin Mint president Jim Campion, who joined representatives from the Bradford Exchange and *Danbury Mint* in a unified call for Streisand's tragic demise. "The death of Barbra Streisand, with her upscale, intensely devoted following, would be ideal."

*Economists say the unex*pected death of a star of Streisand's magnitude would translate to a 70 percent sales boost for the $1 billion col-

see STREISAND page 6

Top: A prototype of a limited-edition commemorative Streisand plate. Left: Franklin Mint president Jim Campion addresses fellow members of the collectible-plate industry.

Area Bedroom Has That Weird Jeff Smell, Housemates Report

PHOENIX—The bedroom of Jeffrey Worthen has that weird sort of Jeff smell, housemates of the 22-year-old Rio Salado Community College art student reported Tuesday.

"I don't know what it is, but the whole room always has that certain distinct Jeffish odor," housemate Evan Cadwaler said. "I can't put my finger on what the smell is exactly, but it definitely smells like Jeff."

Convening to discuss containment strategies for the mysterious Jeff-based vapors, Cadwaler and fellow housemates Eric Mayhew and Chad Beem agreed that the smell seems to be strongest at around 8:30 p.m.

"His room is right off the room where the TV is, and usually, like halfway through *The X-Files*, we're hit with like this wave of, well, I can't really describe it."

According to Mayhew, the housemates first noticed the Jeff smell this past May, when Worthen left the door to

see SMELL page 10

Jeffrey Worthen

Above: Worthen's room.

Like many *Onion* stories, this one has multiple warheads, each of which, like a Zen arrow, finds its mark without being aimed at it. The targets, in this case, are not only Clinton and his legacy obsession but also his wife and her ambitions, the family values of Islamic kings, and (as always) the affectless, literal-minded diction of hack newspaper writing. A deft move: the name Monica Lewinsky is not mentioned.

The Clinton scandal was too obtrusive to suit *The Onion's* brand of blurry metahumor except occasionally. When *The Onion* covers big national and international stories, it prefers the kind of thing that can be approached sideways, from a distance, and through a fog of solemn ignorance, as in

FED TO MAKE INTEREST RATES UNDULATE RELAXINGLY

WASHINGTON, DC—In a major step toward establishing a more "soothing and peaceful" U.S. economy by Fiscal Year 1998,

> ederal Reserve Board Chairman Alan reenspan announced yesterday that he will nake the prime lending rate undulate relaxngly, moving back and forth in a restful, avelike motion.

The Onion's own rhythm, come to hink of it, is restful and wavelike. The ffect of reading it is cumulative. Its ominal subject at any given moment an be anything at all: nuclear proliferaion, toy manufacturing, Greek mytholgy, gun control, whatever. But its real ubject—the subject that is present, implicitly or explicitly, in every line—is the ast of these: "whatever," in the richly uggestive contemporary meaning of hat useful word. Put another way, *The Onion's* underlying, omnipresent subect is the enervating but not entirely disagreeable numbness of middle-American life—a bumpy custard whose ingredients include suburban sprawl, the homogenized consumerism of malls and fast-food restaurants, the dopey (in both senses) postadolescent culture of passive, halfhearted rebellion, and the random static of undifferentiated media bombardment, to which being slightly deaf is a prerequisite to sanity.

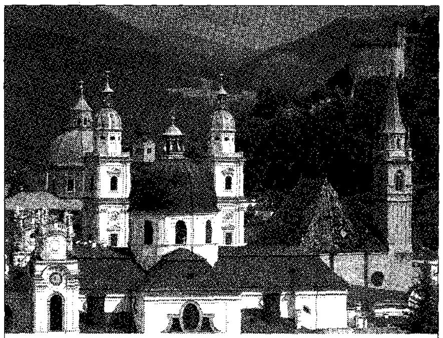
The Onion's form, perfectly complementing its content, is that of a cheerful, mediocre, chain-operated, small-city monopoly newspaper, complete with sprightly charts, astrology and advice columns, news briefs, and op-ed pieces. As an incidental by-product of this editorial strategy, *The Onion* has become a more cogent running critique of the assumptions of mainstream journalism than any review of media studies. And irony is built into the form, which liberates *The Onion* to treat its ostensible subjects in a manner that is at once wilder and less closely tied to specific events than is customary in the field of topical satire. Like the humble but powerful vegetable from which it takes its name, *The Onion* has a long shelf life. It keeps its flavor. An *Onion* that's two years old can be as pungent, as crunchy, and as capable of bringing tears to the eyes as one that's fresh off the delivery truck.

IT may seem odd, at first blush, that the funniest publication in the United States should be a college-town throwaway published in the Corn Belt and supported by ads for places like Big Mike's Super Subs, University Optical, and the Pizza Pit. But this is actually quite logical. The demand for humor product in this country is such that anyone suspected of being able to write funny is quickly descended upon by television and film-industry recruiters, whisked off to one of the coasts, and given a large salary. This dynamic reduces the chances that anything that is genuinely new and different will have time and space to develop. *The Onion*, by remaining isolated and out of it for the better part of its first decade of existence, made itself an exception to the pattern.

Just about every American city, especially if it is home to a college of any size, has one or more "alternative" papers—free weeklies or biweeklies aimed at young people and featuring entertainment listings, reviews of movies and music, interviews with local rockers and visiting New Agers, and classifieds for apartment sublets and part-time jobs. That's the back of the paper; the front usually contains a few news articles and opinion pieces about local politics, "life style" trends, or environmental outrages. *The Onion* looks like one of those papers. In certain ways, it *is* one of those papers. It is published in Madison, Wisconsin, home to a prominent Big Ten university. It has the usual arts-and-entertainment section, with music reviews and the rest. It is distributed the way such papers are usually distributed—by being left in piles in alcoves and in take-one street boxes. The difference is that the features and news stories in the front of *The Onion* are fake.

The Onion was started in 1988 by two guys, Tim Keck and Chris Johnson. After a year or so, they left for points west, where they ended up founding "normal" alternative papers—the Seattle *Stranger* and the Albuquerque *Alibi*, respectively. Back in Madison, two other guys took over. One of them, Scott Dikkers, who was twenty-four at the time, became *The Onion's* editor-in-chief. The other, Peter Haise, who was twenty-one, became its publisher. They're still there, still in the same jobs. Their ages have changed, though: now they're thirty-four and thirty-one, respectively.

It took five or six years of marinating in Midwestern isolation for Dikkers and his staff of ill-paid writers to perfect their formula. The paper's original format was an unfocussed hodgepodge, intermittently parodying supermarket tabloids. The switchover to the clichéd prose and bland, boosterish typography favored by chain newspapers and *USA Today*



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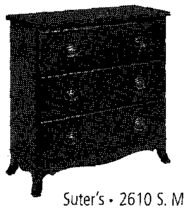

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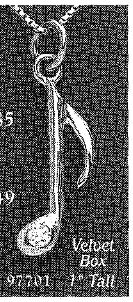

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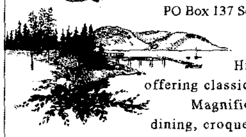

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was fully implemented in the summer of 1995. This style lends itself especially well to bogus "studies," and these have become an *Onion* staple, under headlines like

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN LINKED TO BURNED POT ROAST

and

REPORT: U.S. STUDENTS LEAD WORLD IN TV JINGLE RECALL

and

REPORT: MANY RAPPERS MAY SUFFER FROM UNREALISTICALLY HIGH SELF-IMAGES

Another breakthrough idea was to write, in that wire-service style, not only about national and international news but also about the staff's own everyday slacker lives and those of their friends and neighbors. "Sitting around on a couch, eating Doritos, being kind of depressed," Scott Dikkers remarked the other day, when he was in New York briefly. "That's our lives. You write about what you know." So *The Onion* runs a lot of radically deadpan "local" stories, in which some utterly banal happening—some "area resident" deciding what to order at McDonald's, for example—is reported in detail, and in hackneyed, important-sounding newspaper language, under a headline like LOCAL MAN WOULD LIKE FRIES WITH THAT.

At the other end of the banality scale, *The Onion* is one of the few organs of popular satire that deal regularly with religion. Naturally, the paper takes aim at retrograde social attitudes (CHURCH GROUP OFFERS HOMOSEXUAL NEW LIFE IN CLOSET), but it often goes deeper than that. An apparently heartwarming feature story about a paralyzed little boy who realizes his dream when his prayer is answered takes an unexpected turn in the subhead: 'NO,' SAYS GOD. And an account of a fatal flood begins this way:

> VANIMO, PAPUA NEW GUINEA—In His first official statement since the July 17 tsunami that claimed the lives of an estimated 3,000 Papua New Guineans, the Lord announced Monday that He killed the island villagers as part of His longtime "moving in mysterious ways" policy, calling the natural disaster "part of My unknowable, divine plan for mankind."

There's no disrespect in this for God or for belief in God—not much, anyway. There's anger, certainly, and sadness—as there is in *The Onion's* bleakly funny evocations of dead-end work and empty leisure. The story is simply a restatement, in wire-service language, of the theological problem of the existence of unmerited suffering in a world supposedly ruled by a beneficent Providence—a problem about which you can laugh or you can cry. *The Onion* chooses to laugh.

OVER the years, there have been several efforts to come up with an American equivalent of *Private Eye*, the great British satirical biweekly. The trouble with these efforts, perhaps, is that they have imitated the wrong aspects of the original. The most successful of them, *Spy*, a New York monthly that flourished during the nineteen-eighties, borrowed *Private Eye's* knowing tone, its practice of giving celebrities cruel nicknames, and its hypereducated, boarding-school-style sarcasm. *The Onion* is not an imitation of anything, and certainly not of *Private Eye*—in fact, nobody at *The Onion* had even heard of *Private Eye* until recently. Editorially, the two publications have little in common apart from the use of fake newspaper stories. *Private Eye*, written by and for London's media and political élite, is dense with allusions and overflowing with inside dope. *The Onion* contains no inside dope whatever—only outside dope. What *Private Eye* is to insiderdom, *The Onion* is to outsiderdom.

In its own way, though, without knowing it, *The Onion* followed *Private Eye's* "business plan," if something so haphazard can be called by that name. Like *Private Eye* (but unlike *Spy*), *The Onion* opted to print on cheap paper, finance itself on a pay-as-you-go basis, and dispense with the infrastructure of slick magazine publishing—expensive direct-mail subscription campaigns, near-total reliance on national advertising, and infusions of cash from nosy, interfering "investors." The result was that when *The Onion* started to get big it did so on its own terms. Beginning in 1994, it launched offshoot editions in Milwaukee, Denver, and Chicago; it now manages to give away a hundred and seventy thousand copies weekly, as against the fifteen thousand it was giving away ten years ago. It has been selling a couple of thousand copies of the Madison edition, for two dollars each, in chain bookstores. In 1996, it launched a Web site (www.theonion.com), which now gets some two million visits a month making *The Onion* arguably the mos popular humor periodical in world history. (The best way to read it, though, i still on paper, where the cheesy ads and newspaper graphics amplify the feeling of offhandedness.) In the last year o so, publications outside the Midwest such as the Washington *Post*, have begun to take respectful notice.

"Our Dumb Century," *The Onion'* first foray into books, came out on Apri Fools' Day and has just gone to No. 1 on the *Times* paperback best-seller list "Our Dumb Century" is a bracing corrective to the plague of anchorman tomes It consists of a hundred and sixty-five never-before-seen, densely packed *Onion* front pages, supposedly dating from January 1, 1900, to January 1, 2000 The front pages lovingly illustrate the history of undistinguished newspaper design down through the decades. There is extensive coverage of events ranging from early social legislation (PURE FOOD AND DRUG ACT WILL LIMIT HUMAN-THUMB LEVELS PERMITTED IN MEATS) the Titanic disaster (WORLD'S LARGEST METAPHOR HITS ICE-BERG), and the Bolshevik Revolution (PRETENTIOUS GOATEED COFFEEHOUSE TYPES SEIZE POWER IN RUSSIA), through the Great Depression (HOOVER HOPES TO RESTORE FAITH IN NATION'S BANKS WITH FREE-TOASTER OFFER) and Watergate (FEDS GUN DOWN NIXON OUTSIDE ARIZONA MOTEL), to the Clinton (NEW PRESIDENT FEELS NATION'S PAIN, BREASTS) era of scientific wonders (FROG WITH HUMAN HEAD WARNS AGAINST DANGERS OF GENETIC ENGINEERING) and public-policy shortfalls (DRUGS WIN DRUG WAR). The book will be followed by a television special on NBC. (All this material, however, is still produced by a half-dozen writers sitting around a squalid room in Madison.)

A modest publicity blitz for "Our Dumb Century" brought Scott Dikkers, the editor-in-chief, to town. He is an interesting-looking fellow—especially his head, which is sharp-featured and completely shaved, so that from some angles he resembles Johnny Rotten, of the Sex Pistols, while from others he recalls Governor Jesse Ventura, of Minnesota. At a press conference, held in the oaken splendor of The Players, on

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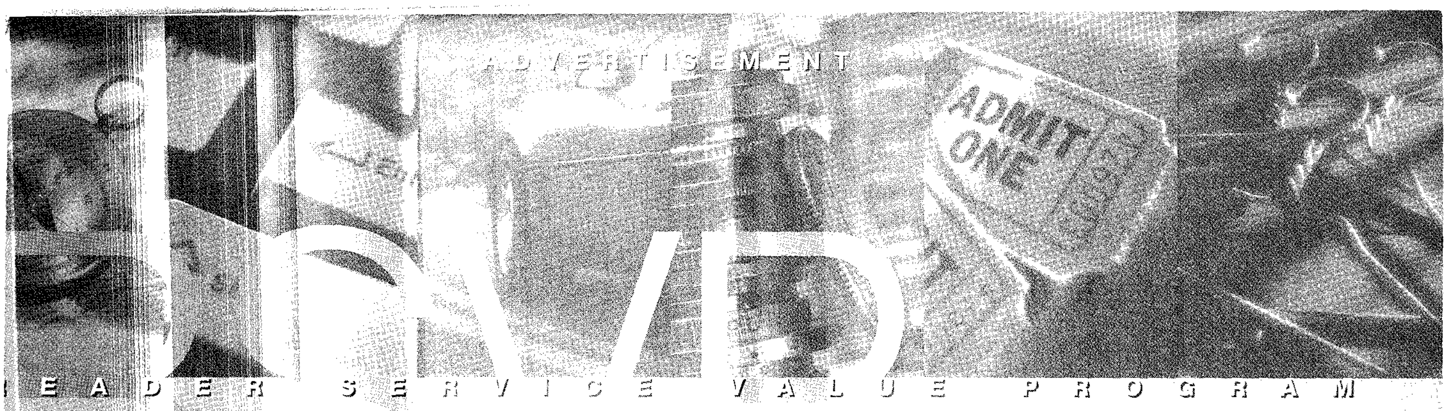

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19	S(TOLL)EN

DOWN

1	PLA(G)IARISM (*I.R.S. mail Pa* anag.)
2	(s)URGE
3	HARE + M
4	RENAS + CENT (*earns* anag.)
5	S(EST)ET
6	ALTERATION (anag.)
7	CON(FI) + DENT (*if* rev.)
11	B + RUT + US
14	S + MALL
16	NOS + E

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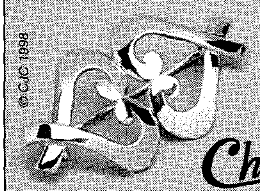

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Gramercy Park, a panel of four distinguished historians, having been introduced with great fanfare, just sat there. (They turned out to be actors engaged as props.) Afterward, to test Dikkers's skills in an interview-type situation, a reporter asked him about his humor influences.

"Letterman," he said. "Letterman. Hey, I'm no armchair historian, but it was Letterman who made the world a sarcastic place. Because of Letterman, everybody I know is sarcastic all the time, in everything they say—never genuine. And Monty Python's Flying Circus, the Beatles of comedy."

On the strength of this highly satisfactory answer, a question was essayed about how it is that Dikkers and his colleagues are still in Madison, despite the allurements of the bicoastal bitch goddess.

"Actually, some of us have left," Dikkers objected. "One guy's a writer for 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer.' Another took a job with Letterman. And another was just made head writer on 'The Daily Show,' on Comedy Central. Most of the people who have left wer destined to leave. If you're from L.A and you get a big offer to go to L.A. you go to L.A. It's different if you're no from that world. I'm a Midwesterne born and bred. The sad truth is, a lot o us Midwesterners are blind to opportunity. For years, Todd Hanson, our hea writer, worked washing dishes. Now h has health insurance. You don't jus throw something like that away."

This is the sort of horse sense (combined with a searing awareness of th crushing horror of existence, of course that has made the Midwest, and *Th Onion*, what they are today. The choic between being Midwestern and bein successful is turning out to be unnecessary. The mountain is going to Mahomet Scott Dikkers and his friends can hav their roots and eat them, too. Instead o allowing itself to be sliced, diced, sautéed and served up at Spago or Balthazar *The Onion*, by just sitting there out i Madison, has grown into somethin large, beautiful, and strange-shaped, lik a 4-H crop exhibit with a blue ribbon on it at the Wisconsin State Fair. ♦

DANCING

BLOWUP

Bombs fall on Matthew Bourne's "Cinderella."

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

"I CAN'T tell you how often I heard the question 'Is Cinderella going to be a woman?'" That's the English choreographer Matthew Bourne speaking to Alastair Macaulay, of the *Financial Times*, about his 1997 "Cinderella," which recently had its United States première, in Los Angeles, and which Bourne hopes to bring to New York this Christmas. The reason for the question, as few theatregoers need to be told by now, is that Bourne's last ballet before "Cinderella" was a "Swan Lake" in which all the swans were recast as men. This act of impertinence went over splendidly. Bourne's "Swan Lake" ran for five months in the West End and then for four months on Broadway—a popular success unheard of for a ballet. But Bourne has imposed no sex change on his Cinderella (only on her fairy godmother). The fillip in this new piece is that it is set in London in 1941, at the height of the blitz. Sirens scream and searchlights rake the sky in the story of the stepchild who goes to the ball and gets the prince.

Usually, the reason for such modernizing is to make an old piece "relevant" to today's audiences, or just to get them to buy tickets. But, in a forthcoming book of interviews with Macaulay, Bourne points out that Prokofiev's score for "Cinderella" was written during the war, and he says he thinks the war influenced it, gave it its undertones of darkness and violence. There may be another

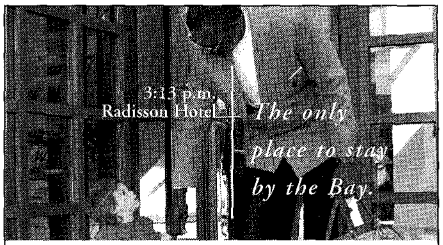
Bourne (right) with his bespectacled heroine, her pilot-prince, her angel, and her stepmother. Photograph by Firooz Zahedi.

reason for the updating. In the historical imagination of Londoners (of whom Bourne is one), the blitz is a sacred episode—a time when they were attacked by mighty enemies, and suffered and waited and won. Likewise Cinderella with her stepsisters. So to set her story during the blitz is to make of it something larger than the sibling-revenge fantasy that it normally is. ("They'll be sorry for the way they treated me.") The new placement gives the tale a moral seriousness, even a tragic note.

As with Bourne's "Swan Lake," however, the solemnity is larded with a lot of nasty fun. Cinderella is a mousy thing in glasses and a pleated skirt. The stepmother is a Norma Desmond type, the stepsisters two quarrelling tramps. Better still are the stepbrothers Bourne has added. One knits and has facial tics. Another creeps around the living room in his pajamas—you can almost smell him—and tries to get his hand up Cinderella's skirt. When the invitations to the ball come, these horrid folk practice the Lindy to Prokofiev and then take off, leaving Cinderella by the fire.

Before that, though, Cinderella has had a visitor—the Angel, Bourne's take on the fairy godmother. If Gabriel had been drawn by Aubrey Beardsley, this is what he would have looked like: boneless body, opalescent white suit, silvered eyelids. Halfway through Act I, he materializes on the mantel—only Cinderella can see him—and he ushers in another visitor, a wounded R.A.F. pilot (this is the "prince"), whom Cinderella tries to help and whom the Stepmother promptly ejects. After the family leaves for the ball, Cinderella wanders out into the dark, blitz-torn streets of London. A bomb drops and the world vanishes. The Angel zooms in on a motorbike, Cinderella hops into the sidecar, and off they go to the ball.

Now comes the confusing part. Cinderella, it seems, passed out in that bomb blast, and it is only in her shattered mind that she goes to the ball. In any case, Act II opens with another terrific explosion ("I'm sure we've nearly killed off a couple of old-age pensioners in the audience," Bourne says in the book), and the curtain goes up on a night club strewn with corpses. As the music begins, the bodies rise and dance again. Cinderella's family arrive, and they all get drunk and act badly. Enter the Pilot, then Cinderella, transformed into a sort of Rita Hayworth. The two of them dance, and the thing



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is done. (Indeed, there's a torchy bedroom duet—with Cinderella in her underwear—spliced right into the ball.) Soon all hell breaks loose. Prokofiev's midnight chimes sound, and out of the past Cinderella's real mother appears, only to be shot dead by the Stepmother. Boom! Cinderella's house descends from the flies, and she, restored to her pleated skirt, is having hysterics in front of it. Medics carry her off. The Pilot stumbles in and finds her shoe.

Act III takes us back to reality. The Pilot is hauled off to a mental hospital and given shock treatments. Cinderella, as it happens, has been taken to the same hospital. She finds him, pries him loose from the electrodes, and produces the evidentiary shoe. They kiss. The final scene shows them at a train station bidding farewell to Cinderella's family—as in other versions, she forgives them—and taking off, presumably for a house in the country, where they will have children, pay taxes, and live until they die.

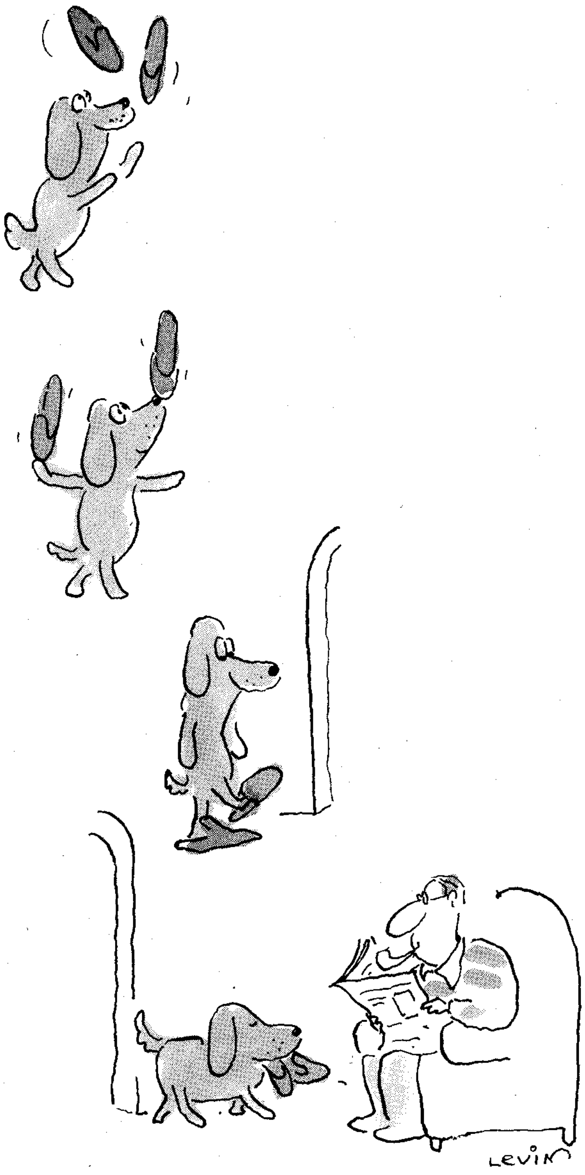
It sounds like a sendup and, in a superficial way, it is. Setting the lovers' reunion in a psycho ward has to have given Bourne some sort of *épatiste* thrill. But for the most part the realism comes off as quite earnest. In the past, Bourne has done ironic takes on classic ballets—one on "The Nutcracker," one on "La Sylphide"—but, as he explains to Macaulay, he eventually tired of being clever: "I've steadily tried for a more generally serious approach to the score and to the subject matter." His "Swan Lake," with its high romanticism, is a good example, and so is "Cinderella," with its anti-romanticism, its effort to show how the fairy tale might apply to ordinary life.

At times, Bourne seems even naïvely realistic, as in his insistence that the more fantastic events in this "Cinderella" are not actually happening—that they are hallucinations, or whatever. He did the same in "Swan Lake," making the swan scenes into the visions of a disordered mind, and carefully pointing this out to interviewers. But, if I am not mistaken, there is a counterlogic operating here. For one thing, the cues that mark the fantastic events as fantasies are none too clear. And, even if we get the point, what difference does it make? In plays and ballets and movies that are about visions, do we actually believe that the visionary events are not happening? Does anyone think that "The Wizard of Oz" is about a girl who has a dream and wakes up? No, it's about a girl who goes to Oz. Insofar as it is a dream, what it tells us is that life is strange—life is a dream.

Furthermore, it is in the "realest" part of "Cinderella," Act I, that we encounter its most fantastic element, the Angel. He is both lovely and sinister; his dancing is both lyrical and grotesque, like the swans' dances in "Swan Lake." Impulses move through him like spasms. At the end, having dispatched Cinderella, he spots another lonely girl. She will be his next project. Yet as he lays his hand on her shoulder she looks up not with pleasure but with a sort of nonspecific awe. Her prince may be coming, she seems to think, or perhaps her house is exploding.

The element of fantasy would not be so strong, however, if it were not banked by an emphatic realism, above all in the acting, which is the specialty of Bourne's company. Ben Wright, as the pervert stepbrother—the one in the pajamas—is a whole English novel in himself. There is a moment in Act I where Cinderella, alone (she thinks) in the living room, pretends to be a fine lady. She puts on her stepmother's fur jacket and drapes herself across a couch. Wright sneaks up on her—we see his demented face rise behind the sofa—but as he gazes at her he pauses and passes his hand over his eyes, in what seems a gesture of pity. This lasts only a second, and then he is going after her, as usual, but in that moment he has introduced the tiny note of complication, of contradiction, that makes the portrait deep and sad as well as funny and repellent. The ballet is full of such things—small gestures of embarrassment or glee or spite that we instantly recognize as real. (It is worth the ticket price just to see how each member of Cinderella's family, in a wholly different way, is foolishly proud and happy doing the Lindy.) In the first cast, Sarah Wildor, Adam Cooper, and Will Kemp—Cinderella, Pilot, and Angel, respectively—are all fine, but really it is the company that is so fine.

This "Cinderella" is not as good as Bourne's "Swan Lake." It is overdetailed—too many characters, too many



events. The anti-fairy-tale libretto sometimes sits poorly with Prokofiev's fairy-tale score. (At the end of Act I, the bomb blast is followed by a waltz.) Finally, as in "Swan Lake" but more so, Bourne's choreography takes second place to his directing. It's not just that the dances are less compelling than the narrative; many of them are less compelling by *way* of being narrative. The movements are often gestural, and the dances tend to proceed by incident (A-B-C) rather than by a development of internal logic (A-B-A). This is a weakness, but, given Bourne's strengths—the bold fantasy, the anchoring realism, and also wit and a heart and keen musicianship—it is hard to wring one's hands.

British ballet in the middle to late twentieth century was dominated by two choreographers, Frederick Ashton and Kenneth MacMillan. Ashton, though he made wonderful narrative ballets, was above all England's master of classicism, of dance as dance. MacMillan was the story man, the dance dramatist. To many of us, MacMillan seemed old-fashioned, even corny, in his attachment to narrative; it was the expansion of classicism, under Ashton in England and Balanchine in America, that constituted the great achievement of twentieth-century ballet. Since the deaths of Ashton and Balanchine, we have been waiting to see their project carried forward. And we are still waiting. Here and in England, the inheritors of ballet classicism have been a dull bunch. Now, at last, in Bourne we have someone really interesting, large-minded—also young (thirty-nine) and wild—and he is an inheritor of MacMillan. Life is strange. ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

CHANGELINGS

Amoral ancient flesh, and Cronenberg's gloomy games.

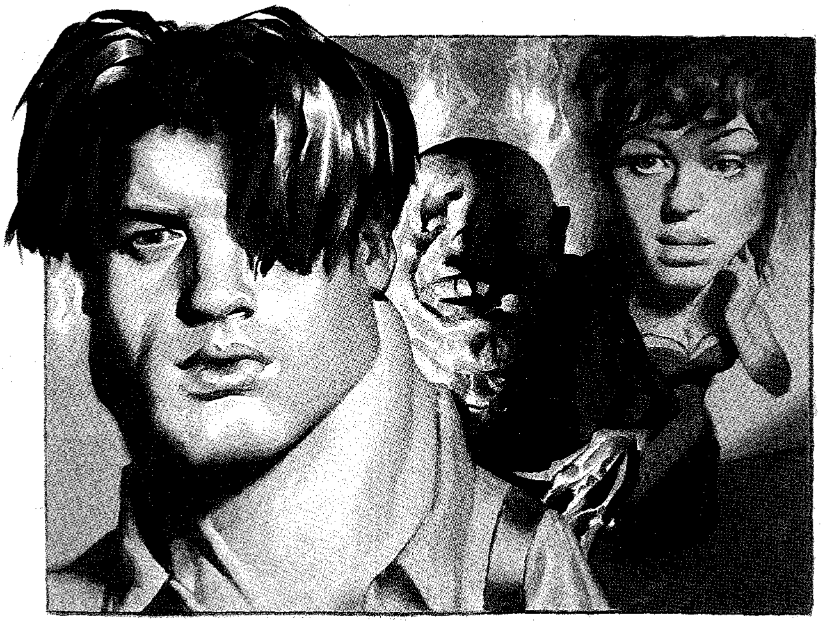
BY ANTHONY LANE

I WANT my mummy. One shouldn't make a fuss about this, but, still, if I go to see a movie entitled "The Mummy" I feel that I have a democratic right to expect bandages. We know what happens in mummy pictures: a bunch of adventurers find a hidden burial site marked with a hieroglyphic inscription that reads "Do Not Disturb," and, having mistaken it for a sign saying "My Room Is Ready for Cleaning Now," they duly get their comeuppance from what appears to be a giant sports injury. This time, however, Universal has gone for something different: instead of a nice old musty package with Boris Karloff or Christopher Lee quietly suffocating inside, we get a skeletal computer-enhanced figure that stalks around with fragments of three-thousand-year-old flesh hanging off it. If you made a nourishing winter soup out of white beans and Terminator, this fellow is what you would find at the bottom of the pot.

As far as audacious genre deconstruction goes, that's about it. The writer and director of "The Mummy" is Stephen Sommers, who has practiced his refurbishment skills with live-action versions of "Huckleberry Finn" and "The Jungle Book." There's only so much you can do with Egyptian revivification, however, and so the standard ingredients are hauled out of the cupboard. The dashing hero is Rick O'Connell (Brendan Fraser), who is blithely, though never ravenously, in quest of treasure; the heroine is Evelyn (Rachel Weisz), bespectacled yet bosomy, and never happier than when manacled to a plinth by the forces of darkness; and the twit is Evelyn's brother, Jonathan (John Hannah), whose cowardice is designed to heighten the already dazzling gleam of O'Connell's courage. These three are the non-expendables; the remaining characters can all go hang, or go melt, or, in the most unfortunate cases, go without their vital organs, which are urgently required by the renascent Mummy if he is to put on a bit of weight and rejoin polite society.

We start with a burnished prelude, set in 1290 B.C., during which the high priest Imhotep is buried alive with a hissing crowd of flesh-eating bugs, thus proving that ancient Egypt, notably ahead of its time in areas such as irrigation and civil bureaucracy, was also the home of the press conference. A quick jump brings us to the nineteen-twenties, and to O'Connell's obsession with the fabled city of Hamunaptra. The twenties are a good Brendan Fraser decade: he has the hale, self-mocking hulkingness that suits the artless journeying of those years. Fraser is on a roll just now, and "The Mummy" is the perfect follow-up to "Gods and Monsters," a fresh and frantic twist on his likability. The joke is that he's never as dumb as you expect, or as his fictional foes would hope him to be; his broad shoulders lend him a touch of Johnny Weissmuller here, although, unlike Johnny, he seems confident that dialogue is the stuff that comes out of the hole at the top of your body.

I'm not so sure. Among the inventive tortures devised by Imhotep, none quite so excruciating as being forced t speak Stephen Sommers's lines. "Lad there's something out there," O'Conne solemnly tells Evelyn. "In a word, evil You could excuse this as tradition hammy horror, but I found it depressin that Sommers should lean on that tradition as a prop for indolence; despite Spielberg-like knack for nudging th recklessness of his action into hilarit his script sounds like an early draft, an there are no first-class frights. The onl whisper of menace comes when Imhotep sifts himself into sand and pour gently through a keyhole; I have a so spot for changelings and shape-shifter and it should be possible to equip ther with a little moral alchemy for goo measure, but "The Mummy" can't b bothered to pause for the consideratio of character. This is partly the fault c the casting director; whoever aske John Hannah to play a yellow Britisl buffoon, for example, was presumabl blind to the fact that he is sly, slender smart, and extremely Scottish. Howeve much he was paid to shout the words "I say, bloody good show, chaps," it wa not enough.



Brendan Fraser's hale, self-mocking heroism is the best part of "The Mummy."

Finally, there is the Arab question. The Arab people have always had the roughest and most uncomprehending deal from Hollywood, but with the death of the Cold War the stereotype has been granted even more wretched prominence. In "The Mummy," I could scarcely believe what I was watching; as one character says that camels are dirty because they spit, the Arab riding behind him expectorates, right on cue. Later, an unfair complaint about the stink of the burial chambers is redirected toward the true source of the smell. Guess who. So here's a party game for any producers with a Middle Eastern setting in mind: try replacing one Semitic group with another—Jews instead of Arabs—and *then* listen for the laugh. One could argue that the racism of "The Mummy" is merely period detail, or that the gags zip by so quickly that they don't have a chance to stick; I find, however, that they hang around while the rest of the movie fades. It's a shame, because much of "The Mummy" is a blast, and you cheerfully root for Brendan Fraser; he promises such innocent fun, and yet the film teases the innocence away from him. Lady, there's something in this movie. In a word, ignorance.

THE new David Cronenberg film, "eXistenZ," is like a negative image of "The Mummy." Cautious, tenebrous, and endlessly tolerant, it snails along in an effort to get under your skin; the special effects are handled and pondered like antique silver, rather than tossed in your face like sand. The heroine of the movie, Allegra Geller (Jennifer Jason Leigh), is under threat because of her genius for designing games; you or I would call them computer games, but in the unspecified future where this story is set there is nothing so vulgar as a terminal in sight, and the console that drives your game is called a pod. It resembles a big, soft hearing aid, with a queasy hint of the intrauterine, and, using a pinkly umbilical power cord, you plug it into your bio port—a welcoming hole at the base of your spine. As is customarily the case with this director, everything is supposed to make you think of something else. "I have this phobia about having my body penetrated," says Ted Pikul (Jude Law), Allegra's new friend, and she has to grease his port before plugging him in for a game. Naughty Mr. Cronenberg.

This sounds repulsively interesting, although I notice that all Cronenberg projects sound interesting before you actually have to watch them. Only in a few cases—"The Fly," "Dead Ringers," parts of "Scanners"—does the final result match the churning anticipation. "eXistenZ" returns us to his much chewed conviction that we cannot say where the organic ends and the technological begins; Ted eats a Chinese meal and, using the wet bones and gristle, clips together a living gun that fires human teeth. Three points suggest themselves here. One, the gun looks unnervingly like a piece of gunk from the Mummy. Two, the visual pun, though cool, is not as cool as James Woods's feeding a videotape into his stomach in Cronenberg's "Videodrome." And, three, so what? Like the rest of the movie, the dripping weaponry is on the brink of telling us something creepy about our culture but never quite gets there. If anything, Cronenberg's script deflates his enterprise by announcing its portent: the characters keep saying things like "It makes my skin crawl" and "There's an element of psychosis here," as if they were writing a critical essay on the film rather than taking part in it. Worse still are the regular hints that the whole tale may or may not be a game itself; call it cute postmodernism if you want, but to me it reeks of the oldest get-out clause of them all—"Why, it was just a dream."

It would be ungracious to deny the pleasures that prick the surface of the movie, starting with its credit sequence—a molten-gold drift through palimpsest and honeycomb. The gruesome comedy is well handled by the British players in particular: Jude Law, Christopher Eccleston, and Ian Holm (performing gooey surgery, as he did in "Alien"). But Jennifer Jason Leigh gives one of her spacey, somnolent, do-I-have-to-get-up? performances, and she infects the proceedings with her gloom, just as Allegra's new game—the eXistenZ of the title—seems to poison not only her pod but the loyalty of those around her. Because of this emotional fever, livid and lowering, Cronenberg shies away from anything that smacks of spontaneity, let alone delight; the saddest editing in "eXistenZ" sees him cutting away from Allegra and Ted when they begin to kiss—as if he were a parent embarrassed by teen-agers, too chilly and distant to feel the heat. If you want to ruminate on genetic mutation, on our perilous indifference to reality, or on the sodomitical implications of your joystick, this is the film for you, but be warned: it's kind of bOrinG. ♦

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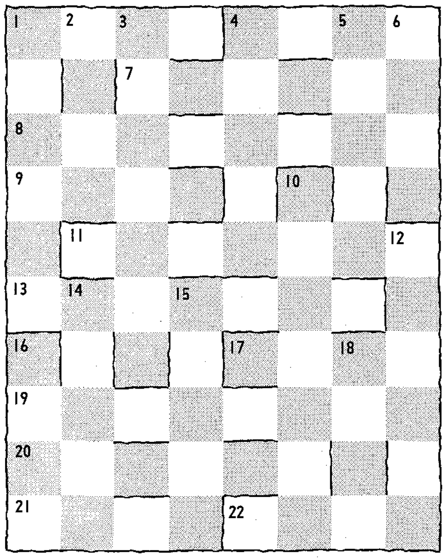

ACROSS

- **1** Win card game holding ace (4)
- **4** Tool cabinet (4)
- **7** Caught Daniel after a struggle (6)
- **8** Like a battery member of the 1968 Detroit Tigers (2,6)
- **9** Give a detailed account of opening of the building addition (4)
- **11** Brass hat manipulated both GIs (3,4)
- **13** Doomed one is trapped in out-of-control Ford (4,3)
- **17** A short taxi passenger from a distance (4)
- **19** Stamp soft East German coin (8)
- **20** Model earned charm (6)
- **21** Stitched four needlepoints? (4)
- **22** Pale actress initially coy (4)

DOWN

- **1** Chopped up for children (1-5)
- **2** Practiced hiking island (4)
- **3** Sign language on the job cut off idea (7)
- **4** Satisfies female with troubles (5)
- **5** Gave hug slowly (5)
- **6** Paradise found in Odense, Denmark (4)
- **10** Drivers sounded horns (7)
- **12** Jailer cut heart out of large bird (6)
- **14** Region behind egg layer (5)
- **15** Had seconds of Belgian waffles at Georgetown University (5)
- **16** Records decapitated gorillas (4)
- **18** Sly part of the foot (4)

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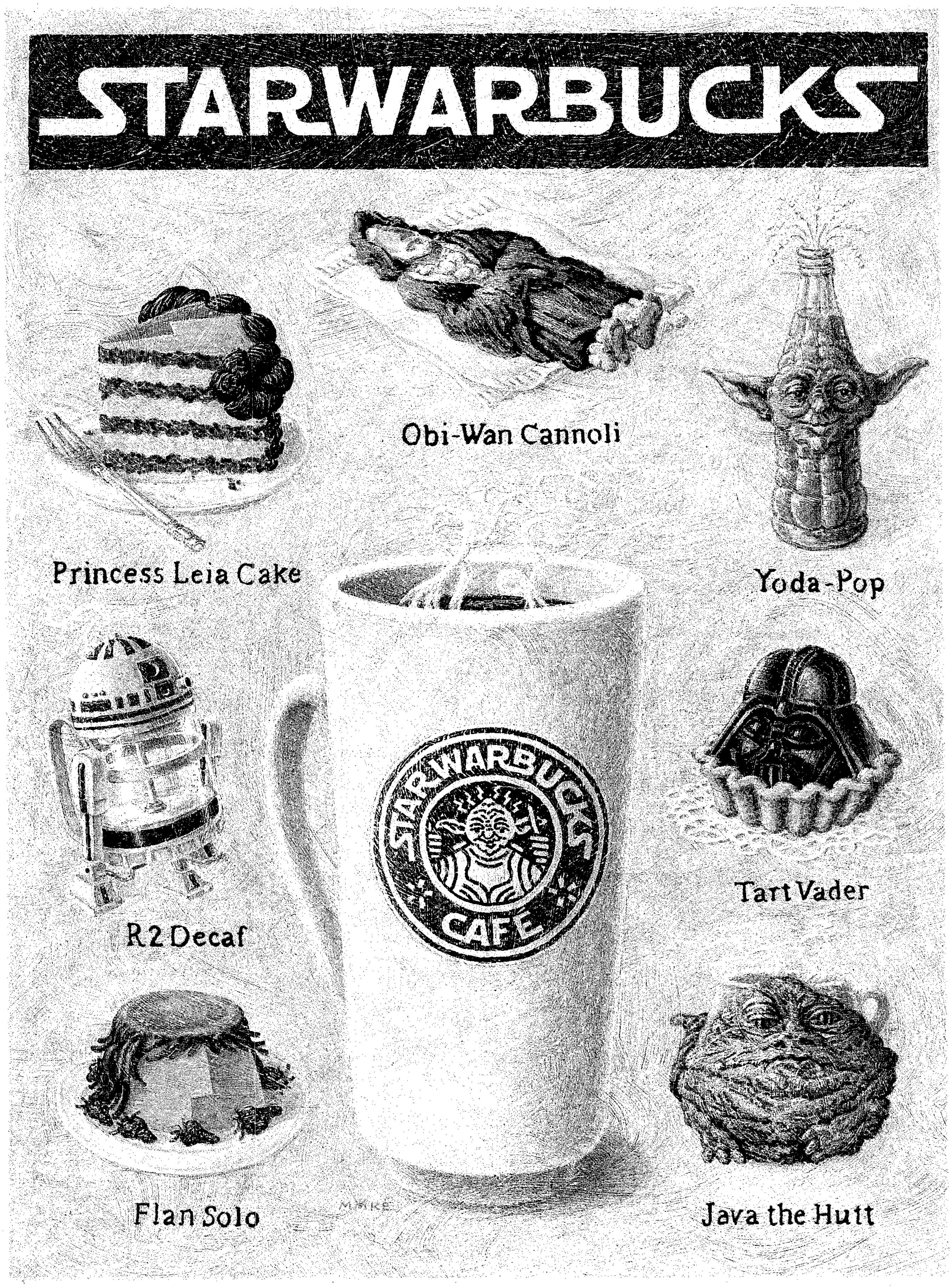
The solution to puzzle No. 86 appears on page 99. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

THE BACK PAGE BY MIKE HODGES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